■ Sports /A25

Phenomenal Tiger back as the Master

■ Business / B1

SMC wins bid for Aussie dairy firm

■ Across / A17

Transport strike muscle-flexing, say organizers

■ News / A2

Palace says Mindanao no Afghanistan

■ Across / A19

Cops: Esperat killing solved with arrest of 4

4M crank calls swamp Patrol 117 every year

BUHAY ANG NAKATAYA DITO... WALANG LOKOHAN!

By Norman Bordadora

FIRST the good news: Last year, Patrol 117 received 42,000 legitimate reports of crime and other emergencies, with government agencies responding to

4M PRNAK/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Former bank president found dead; suicide eyed

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Doris Dumlao

A GUNSHOT shattered the silence of Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City yesterday at noon.

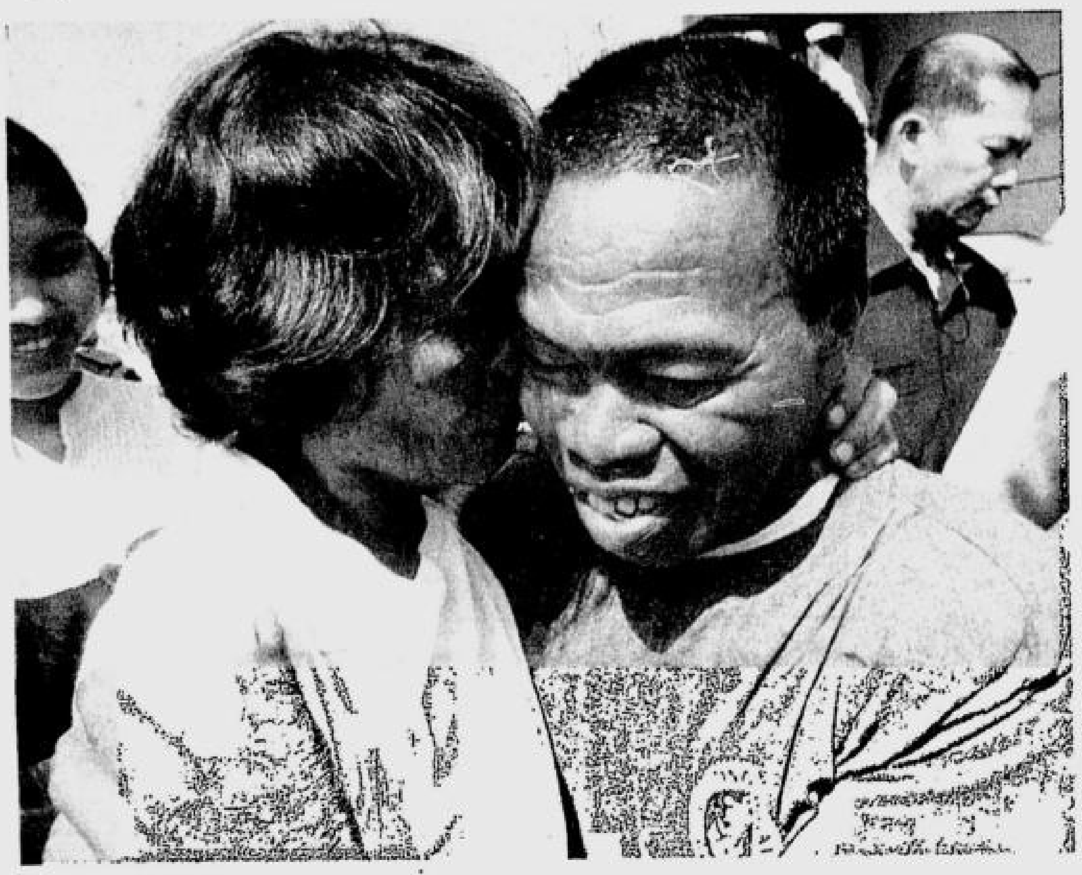
The security guards and caretakers were startled.

They traced the sound of the gunshot and

FORMER/ A5

FPJ widow drops poll protest case

Susan says SC used technicality to conceal truth



HOMECOMING
Zaldy Takatane is greeted by his wife Milagros on arrival at Philippine Navy headquarters. Takatane was one of four fishermen rescued near the Kalayaan Islands after 20 days at sea. *(Story on Page A2)* ERIK ARAZAS

By Armand N. Nocum
and Nelson F. Flores

ACTRESS Susan Roces has dropped her bid to replace her late husband, opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., in the electoral protest he had filed before the Supreme Court.

But she assailed the high court, sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), for allegedly using "technicality to conceal the truth" amid allegations of widespread fraud that marred last year's elections.

In a "final manifestation," Roces (real name: Jesusa Sonora Poe) said she was no longer filing a motion for reconsideration to the March 29 ruling of the Supreme Court.

The high court's ruling threw out the protest filed by Poe as well as Roces' petition for intervention and substitution following her husband's death on Dec. 14, 2004.

"Enough is enough!" Roces said in a manifestation that her lawyer, Sixto S. Brillantes Jr., filed yesterday afternoon.

"The honorable (PET) has spoken, and has so spoken with unanimity," she said of the 15-0 vote of the justices.

She said the filing of a motion for reconsideration "would simply be an exercise in futility."

The PET dismissed Poe's case against President Macapagal-Arroyo "on the ground that no real party in interest has come forward within the period allowed by law, to intervene in this case or be substituted for the deceased protestant."

In rejecting her petition, the tribunal said Poe's widow was not "the party who would be benefited or injured by the judgment, and the party who is entitled to avail of the suit."

Roces said that although she found the PET's resolution

FPJ WIDOW/ A4

FOREIGN Minister U Nyan Win of controversial Burma (Myanmar) arrives at the meeting of Asean foreign ministers at the Mactan Shangri-La Hotel in Cebu City. AFP

Asean foreign ministers split on Burma role

MACTAN—Southeast Asian foreign ministers were deadlocked here yesterday over whether Burma's (Myanmar) internationally condemned military junta should be allowed to head the Asean group in two years.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) ministers grappling with the issue at their annual retreat here were expected to reach a common stand by the end of the day, an official said.

The question had exposed divisions in the 10-nation Asean, with older members such as the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia demanding real democratic change in the country.

Newer members, such as Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, have taken a more supportive stand, some invoking Asean's long-held tradition of consensus building and noninterference in the affairs of its members.

Burma, internationally condemned for political and rights abuses, including the detention of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, is due to take the alphabetically rotating chairmanship of Asean in 2006.

The United States and the European Union, which had imposed economic sanctions on the country, have been pressuring the regional grouping to block its chairmanship.

A senior Philippine diplomat at the Cebu retreat said Burma could either bend to the calls or make reforms to underscore their commitment to their "road map to democracy."

"It's either they stay by making compromises or voluntarily give up the chairmanship," the diplomat said.

ASEAN/ A6

VAT support tied to antigraft drive, poll shows

MOST Filipinos are willing to swallow Malacañang's bitter pill of a higher value-added tax (VAT) if the government shows it can curb corruption and cut down on frivolous expenses.

This was revealed in a March 3-16 survey by Pulse Asia Inc., which also showed that nearly half or one out of two Filipinos doubted Malacañang had a firm handle on the fiscal crisis.

Asked what would persuade them to back a VAT rate increase from 10 percent to 12 percent, 68 percent of the respondents cited anti-corruption and waste measures.

Pulse Asia executive director Ana Maria L. Tabunda said this concern "notably trumps all other reservations" regarding support for a tax raise, including the minimal impact of the VAT rate increase on the poor, which had become the point of debate in the VAT bill in Congress.

Other reasons cited by respondents for backing the VAT rate increase were the removal of tax exemptions on favored corporations and sectors, improvement of tax and revenue collections, and the necessity of fixing the fiscal situation to avoid further borrowings.

The Pulse Asia survey showed that

VAT/ A6

PCA chief under fire for blocking P8.4-B coco project

By Christine Gaylican
Manila
and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

NEWLY installed Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Administrator Evangeline Valbuena is being pressured to step down for refusing to support the use of some P8.4 billion in coconut levy funds for a single project in Agusan del Sur.

Valbuena said she received text messages from a Malacañang official in the first week of April asking for her formal resignation from PCA. She was referring to Renato Velasco, director general of the Philippine Information Agency.

Valbuena said yesterday she was awaiting the final word from Malacañang if she would be retained as PCA administrator.

"I have been performing my duties as administrator in spite of all these problems," she said. "I attended a meeting with the League of Governors held in Bohol last week and presented the agency's projects."

Valbuena acknowledged that she was taking the heat for disapproving the Agusan Reserve Area Development Project allegedly being pushed by no less than Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

"I am not supportive of the project because, as I have reminded Secretary Yap, it amounts to pouring a big amount of the coco levy fund on a single project, in a single town," the PCA chief said.

The coconut levy, now amounting to

PCA/ A6

Latin America may get its first pontiff

By Lito B. Zulueta

VATICAN CITY—With the conclave just a week away, there are predictions the papacy may move not only farther away from Rome but from Europe as well, with Latin America tipped as possibly the place the new pope would come from.

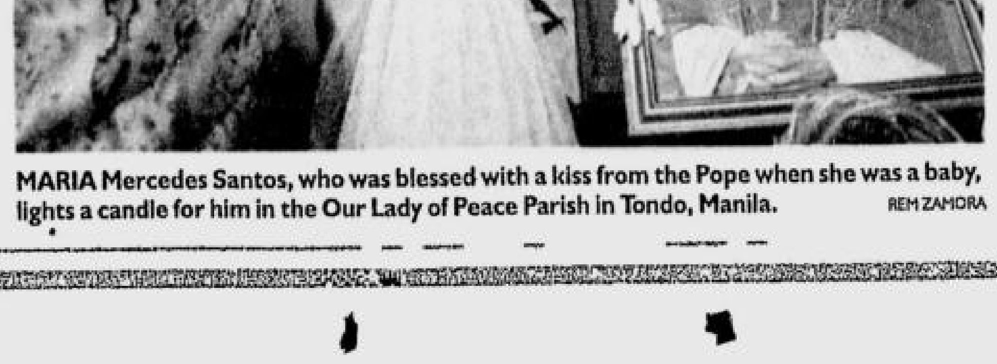
Although there is talk that Italian churchmen desire an Italian restoration to the papacy—and there are leading Italian prelates for the job—Vatican observers concede the race is wide open and a cardinal from outside Europe could get elected.

"Anything is possible after Karol Wojtyla," said Fr. Jerry Stooke of the Dominican curia here. "He broke the hold of the Italians on the papacy. After a Polish pope, a non-European pope has become a distinct possibility, probably a Latin American one."

Sr. Digna Maria Rivas, a Nicaraguan nun who heads the Rome house of the worldwide Good Shepherd congregation, said a Latin American pope was not farfetched.

"A Latin American pope may sound extraordinary because he would be the first," Rivas ex-

LATIN/ A22



MARIA Mercedes Santos, who was blessed with a kiss from the Pope when she was a baby, lights a candle for him in the Our Lady of Peace Parish in Tondo, Manila. REM ZAMORA

Pope visit left deep imprint on Tondo parish

By Volt Contreras

MARIA Mercedes Santos, 25, was rushed to the hospital in Manila for a high fever on the same weekend Pope John Paul II lay feverish and dying in The Vatican.

What's the connection? Nothing much, except that Santos was one of the lucky babies embraced and kissed by the Pope during his first Philippine tour 24 years ago.

The Pontiff made a 30-minute stopover in an obscure corner of the world called Tondo on Feb. 18, 1981. Like many who have had a close encounter with JPII, Santos and her fellow parishioners believe that the Pope left a lasting mark on their lives.

POPE/ A22

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly clourainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/04/07/05

Palace: Mindanao no Afghanistan

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

MINDANAO is no Afghanistan.

Malacañang yesterday issued this statement as it took exception to remarks made by US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli that terrorism and extreme poverty in Mindanao could turn it into the next Afghanistan.

"Such negative hyperbole to describe the Mindanao situation is out of tune with what is happening on the ground," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

"We are making gains against terrorism and poverty every single day and week that passes," he added.

Bunye stressed the US was an "ally" in raising hopes for Mindanao in its transformation from an area of conflict to one of peace, development and harmony for Christians, Muslims and the *lumad* (local tribes).

In an interview last week with SBS-TV Australia, Mussomeli had described Mindanao as "almost the new mecca of terrorism."

"The threat is more long-term; Mindanao is such a lawless—certain portions of Mindanao—are so lawless, so porous, the borders, that you run the risk of it becoming like an Afghanistan situation," Mussomeli had said.

The military admitted yesterday terrorist activities in Mindanao had reached "alarming" levels, but it dismissed Mussomeli's suggestion that it could become another Afghanistan.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Brig. Gen. Jose Honrado said the government was confronting the terrorism problem as best it could.

"We view the situation in Mindanao as alarming, but not to the extent the charges d'affaires has been expounding," Honrado told reporters.

He said, "We never denied that terrorism exists in Mindanao and we never denied that we are confronting insurgents and other lawless elements [there]."

Honrado said the AFP had also acknowledged the links between the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror network and the homegrown Abu Sayyaf bandit group and "factions of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front."

"We never said the ties did not exist," Honrado said, reiterating, however, the official government line that the MILF as an organization did not have links to the JI.

Enraged by Mussomeli's statements, Mindanao lawmakers yesterday demanded the US envoy substantiate his claim or apologize for placing the country in a bad light.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero wanted more as he asked Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to file a diplomatic protest should the No. 2 man in the US Embassy fail to back up his "unfair assessment."

"A ranking diplomat of the US Embassy could not just issue such kinds of statements without basis. So the Department of Foreign Affairs should coordinate with the US Embassy to [see] if this was just a guess, prediction or has basis in fact," Escudero said at a press conference.

"Is this the way the (US) treats a staunch ally?" asked House Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin.

"Is Mussomeli saying his president (George W. Bush) was lying," snapped Rep. Mayo Almario, ex-chair of the House committee on Mindanao affairs.

Salapuddin said Mussomeli's "statements were in contrast to President Bush's recent recognition of the country's efforts at making the world safer with a series of terrorist arrests."

Almario questioned Mussolemi's motive, saying, "Is the US laying the ground for active antiterror operations in the country or do they want to derail the government peace talks with the MILF set for this month?"

Anak ng Mindanao Party-list Rep. Mujiv Hataman minced no words. "This is an irresponsible statement from a diplomat. He should lay down his basis."

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Joel G. Virador said, "The United States is apparently hell-bent on portraying Mindanao as a terrorist haven to justify further intervention through the entry of more troops in the region."

The Mindanao solon said the US was "throwing a monkey wrench" into the GRP-MILF peace talks, set to resume in Malaysia on April 16, by tagging the MILF as a possible terrorist organization.

Mussomeli had earlier said the US was reviewing its blacklist of terrorist groups but there was no specific plan to include the MILF on the list.

With Michael Lim Ubac and Jerome Aning

Faith, luck, keen eye lead to rescue of 4 lost fishermen

By Leila B. Salaverria and
Dona Z. Pazzibugan

FAITH, a dose of luck and the keen eye of a radio reporter led to the rescue of four fishermen from Subic, Zambales, who had been lost at sea for 20 days.

This according to the pilot of the Philippine Coast Guard plane from which the missing fishermen were first spotted on Saturday.

Yesterday morning, the four fishermen faced the media, just one day after their rescue.

Sunburned

Only their sunburned skin betrayed the ordeal of Pedro Pialan, Zaldy Takatane, Jimmy Francis and Ronald Mercado, all of Castillejos, Zambales, whose boat, the Maria Emelyn II, went adrift on March 22.

The four were picked up by the Navy boat, BRP Mariano Alvarez, near the Kalayaan Islands shortly after dawn on April 10.

Capt. Aaron Reconquista, who was flying the PCG's Islander plane on Saturday, said the fishermen were spotted just as he was about to return to Palawan because he was running out of fuel.

He described finding the fishermen as "a miracle."

"Imagine, we were about to head back to land," Reconquista said.

Pope's help

He said that 20 minutes before the men were found, he had been praying to the late Pope John Paul II.

"It was a miracle from the Pope," he said.

Reconquista recalled that he had just brought his plane up to 5,500 feet from 2,500 feet, intending to glide back to land to save on fuel, when one of those on board, dyER reporter Irene Jamora, looked out the window and saw the flash of a yellow-orange object at sea.

"*Baka sila yun* (That might be them)," he quoted Jamora as saying. Jamora and another reporter, Jerry Abad, were on the PCG plane.

Yellow-orange flash

The flash of yellow-orange turned out to be the awning of the banca which PCG Capt. Lino Dabi had advised the fishermen to attach so they could easily be spotted.

Since the search began, Dabi had been in touch with the fishermen over the latter's high frequency radio to check for clues on their whereabouts.

Reconquista said that after spotting the men, he relayed the information to a US Navy P3-Orion, which had been searching over another area.

Flying so fast

Dapi, who guided the P3-Orion, said the plane was flying so fast it had difficulty spotting the fishermen.

He said that at one point, he told the fishermen to wave so the US plane's pilot could see them.

The P3-Orion's pilot became confused, however, when he spotted several bancas and all their passengers were waving at him.

This delayed confirmation of the missing men's location by almost four hours, Dapi said.

No fuel

The four fishermen were sailing for the Scarborough Shoal when they ran out of fuel.

They survived by eating squid and by drinking the water in the banca's radiator and, later, their own urine.

On hand to meet the fishermen at Navy headquarters in Manila yesterday were Navy chief Vice Admiral Ernesto de Leon, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman and Sen. Richard Gordon, who had asked the US Navy for help in searching for the fishermen.

Pialan said they had held on to their hope of being found after they saw the US plane earlier.

Stress debriefing

But Soliman prevented the media from asking questions, saying the fishermen were still confused from their ordeal.

She said the four would undergo stress debriefing.

"Even though they appear healthy, they are undergoing internal turmoil which we need to process so we can help them," Soliman said in Filipino.

They were due to return to Zambales yesterday.

Loren identifies 6 provinces where she said she was cheated

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER Senator Loren Legarda yesterday identified six provinces where she claimed "massive electoral frauds" and "manifest canvassing errors" had transpired, to support her electoral protest against Noli de Castro.

In a manifestation filed with the Supreme Court through her lawyers in connection with her election protest against Vice President Noli de Castro, Legarda named Cebu, Pampanga and Maguindanao as the provinces where "massive electoral frauds" took place.

She also identified Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur and Surigao del Sur as the provinces where "manifest electoral errors" were committed.

Legarda said his lawyers had actually identified 44 provinces where massive frauds took place and another 11 provinces where manifest errors were reported.

But Supreme Court, acting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, had ordered Legarda to name the first six pilot provinces where she believed she was cheated to determine whether there was a need to proceed with the recount of votes in other questioned provinces.

Legarda, who ran for vice president under the banner of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP), told the INQUIRER she was confident that a faithful recount of the ballots in Cebu and Pampanga alone would be enough to overtake the 800,000 vote-lead of de Castro over her in the May 2004 elections.

She also expressed confidence that she would be able lead by 400,000 votes once the ballot boxes in Maguindanao were counted, and another 100,000 votes from the three areas where manifest errors were committed.

She recalled that she topped the senatorial elections in Cebu in 1998 while De Castro only placed 13th in the 2001 senatorial election in the same province.

In Pampanga, another province where she claimed "massive electoral frauds" were committed in 2004, she also topped the senatorial elections in 1998.

She also pointed out that in Maguindanao, no election actually took place in 2004, yet electoral returns were reported in favor of De Castro

"I'm doing this in the interest of truth, fairness and justice, and to uphold democracy," she said.

In the six pilot provinces she listed, Legarda said many of the electoral returns contained falsified signatures and thumb marks, and were also patently altered to favor her rival.

She stressed that in filing the protest, she was not accusing anybody.

"I only want to protect the rights of the people who voted for me, so that their true choice for vice president would be properly recorded, as is their prerogative under our Constitution and the laws," she said.

"I also want the true results of the election to be known by our people, so that justice and democracy will be upheld."

Asked how long she expected her protest to be resolved, she said that she was assured by Supreme Court officials that the recount would be finished by December.

Asked whether the recount might be prolonged by De Castro's counter-protest, Legarda said that in De Castro's counter-protest, he had contested the results in only a few provinces and that his right to question results from other provinces had already expired.

She added that even in those provinces where De Castro had protested the returns, she believed that she had decisively won.

Indon terror suspect pleads not guilty; 3 others admit crime

AN INDONESIAN terror suspect pleaded not guilty yesterday to the Makati bus bombing that killed four people on Valentine's Day but his three Filipino co-accused admitted to multiple murder charges.

The Indonesian, who goes by one name Rohmat, is a self-confessed member of the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah. He and a companion were arrested in a military checkpoint in Datu Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on March 16, on board a motorcycle. He was presented to the media six days later.

Rohmat, 25, told reporters after arraignment in the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 60 that he had nothing to do with the Feb. 14 bombing because he was in Mindanao at the time. But he claimed he provided training in weapons, tactics and map reading to three other suspects—Gamal Baharan, Abu Khalil Trinidad and Gappal Bannah—who entered a guilty plea.

Bannah, from Zamboanga City, was identified by police as a supplier of TNT explosives to Trinidad and Baharan, who allegedly planted the bomb inside the passenger bus.

Of the three, only Bannah initially entered a guilty plea. But to the surprise of many, Baharan and Trinidad changed their minds and pleaded guilty to the charges of multiple murder, a crime punishable by death.

"I am ready to die. If that's what the government wants. It would be like the government would be giving happiness to the Muslims. For me, I did not violate the Islam [faith]," said Trinidad in Filipino in an interview after the hearing.

Showing no remorse for the victims, the handcuffed Trinidad said: "That's their destiny. Besides, death would catch up with them in time, it just so happened that they died in an explosion of a bus."

State prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco welcomed the guilty pleas, saying these would make it easier for the government to secure a conviction. *Reports by Tarra V. Quismundo and AP*

Erap failed to eradicate jueteng, says witness

By Nelson F. Flores

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada tried, but failed, to use the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office to eradicate *jueteng* in 2000.

This was the testimony of former PCSO general manager Romeo Golpeo during yesterday's continuation of Estrada's multimillion-peso plunder trial at the Sandiganbayan. Golpeo was the 30th defense witness.

Golpeo told the antigraft court that sometime in March 2000, Estrada summoned him and former PCSO chief Rosario Lopez to Malacañang to ask them for help in stopping *jueteng*, an illegal numbers game patronized mainly by the poor.

"*Jueteng* is a problem to me. Corruption has reached local officials and the Philippine National Police. Can't the PCSO do anything to stop *jueteng*?" Golpeo quoted Estrada as saying.

Golpeo said they told Estrada they would have to study the matter.

Last month, former Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) chair Alice Reyes gave a similar testimony.

Reyes said Estrada had tried to end *jueteng* in the country by replacing it with the Bingo 2-Ball game in 2000 with Pagcor's help but this failed.

Golpeo also testified that Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson had sought P55 million from the PCSO to fund a medical mission to his province in October 2000, but he did not get the money.

Shortly after, Singson publicly denounced Estrada for corruption after an attempt was allegedly made on the governor's life.

Filipino Center in Hawaii struggling to pay $3.5-M debt

WAIPAHU, Hawaii—The 3-year-old Filipino Community Center, hailed as a symbol of the economic and political empowerment Filipino Americans have achieved in Hawaii, is struggling financially.

The community center is burdened by $3.5 million in debt from a loan that it needed to complete construction.

"I have sleepless nights about paying down the loan," said Eddie Flores, who spearheaded the project with fellow businessman Roland Casamina.

The center had to take out a $4 million loan to finish building the $14-million facility because it was drawn into a lawsuit related to ownership of the property it was built on. Because of the lawsuit, federal grants totaling $3.5 million were held up.

The $4-million loan was paid down to $2.6 million in August, but interest payments of $17,000 a month were taking a toll on the center's budget. Center officials decided last fall to refinance at $3.5 million for 10 years at a fixed interest rate, center president Geminiano Arre Jr. said.

"Our goal is to pay off the loan as fast as we can so we don't have to go back to the state or city for funds to run programs," Arre said. "We got to find a way to pay off the loan, otherwise every penny we make will have to go to the loan and programs will always suffer."

Arre, 70, was hired in August and is the fourth person to run the center in 34 months. The former city finance director and University of Hawaii director of student housing is determined to bring openness, stability and accountability.

He started off this year by taking a 40 percent pay cut and has reduced the office staff to four people, including himself.

"I'm the fourth head in less than four years, we're on our third accountant and fourth clerk," Arre said. "Turnovers compound the problem. We're looking for stability. When I came on, no one was answering phones, there were no set working hours and the ballroom was not being rented on holidays."

Staff is now working from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and four hours on Saturdays.

"We have people who can speak Tagalog, Visayan and English," Arre said. "I'd like to see this place open seven days a week. We need to be a community center open when people are available to visit."

The center earns money from office spaces leased to 10 businesses and rental of the ballroom. But the technology center, featuring 32 desktops and video-conferencing equipment, remains unused.

"It's really a waste," Arre said. "We just don't have the money to hire people to run it and do training."

Jocelyn Collado, who recently visited the center, said she thought there should be more educational programs to draw visitors.

"I thought there would be more things for young people to learn about Filipino culture, like what the Okinawan Center does," she said. "If there are programs, there doesn't seem to be a lot of them. I think the challenge is to get more programs for people to come."

Arre said he has brought in Filipino folk dancing, ballroom dancing and martial arts classes, making Tuesday and Thursday nights active at the center.

The 4,500-square-meter center opened in June 2002 and was touted as the largest such center of its kind outside the Philippines.

AP

More Filipinos warming to idea of nat'l ID–poll

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

GOVERNMENT'S plan to require Filipinos to have a national identification card got a boost from a survey showing that the public supports its use for fighting terrorism and trusts the government to protect privacy.

A Social Weather Stations survey showed three out of five Filipinos agree that having a national ID card would be a "big help in the fight against terrorism." About half of Filipinos believe that the government can be trusted to protect private information contained in the ID.

In the survey conducted on Feb. 25 to March 10, 60 percent either strongly or somewhat agreed when asked whether a national ID would be a big help against terrorism, with 21 percent saying they disagree. Eighteen percent were undecided.

Support for the national ID is high in the Visayas and among the upper social classes.

Visayas registered a net 53 percent agreement (agree minus disagree) to the national ID. In Metro Manila, there was a net agreement of 36 percent, out of the 58 percent who agree and 22 percent who disagree.

The rest of Luzon also gave a high score in favor of the national ID, a net of 37 percent while Mindanao registered a net agreement of 32 percent.

"Support for the national ID as a measure against terrorism is also high across socio-economic classes, with classed ABC and D showing stronger support than class E," SWS' Iremae Labucay said.

The ABC and D classes both gave a 40 percent net agreement to the ID but there was higher agreement to the proposal from the upper class.

But Labucay said agreement to the national ID as a tool against terrorism fluctuated since the SWS asked the question in November 2001, then in December 2002 and in the past two months.

"This year, agreement declined by 6 points while disapproval gained by the same percentage points," Labucay said in her report.

In November 2001, there was a net agreement of 31 percent which rose to 51 percent by December 2002.

Labucay said Visayas has consistently supported the national ID with a 36 percent net agreement in 2001 and 51 percent in 2002.

Pinoys may soon visit Laos without visas

MACTAN ISLAND, Cebu—Filipinos traveling to Laos will soon no longer need to secure a visa.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo on Sunday signed an agreement with Laos Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Somsavat Lengsavad exempting ordinary Filipino and Lao passport holders from having to secure visas to travel between the two countries.

In his remarks during the signing ceremony, Romulo said the agreement would boost the free and safe movement of people between the two countries and would lead to vigorous exchanges in goods and services between Laos and the Philippines.

"This document symbolizes the partnership between our countries and our commitment to support the strengthening of our friendly relations and facilitating travel between our citizens," said Romulo.

The visa exemption agreement will take effect upon the completion of all legal requirements, in particular its ratification by the respective heads of state of the Philippines and Laos.

Romulo said the agreement would promote greater knowledge and understanding of the two countries' rich cultural heritage, unique historical sites and traditional arts and crafts.

The agreement, said Romulo, is also a building block for the full implementation of the Asean agreement to facilitate intra-Asean travel and promote regional tourism.

Speaking through an interpreter, Lengsavad agreed with Romulo that the pact would foster friendship and understanding between the two nations as well as boost trade and tourism.

"I would like also to express my thanks to the staff of the foreign ministers for the drafting of the agreement," he said. *Inquirer News Service*

NEWSBRIEFS

Japanese shot dead

AN unidentified man shot dead a 51-year-old Japanese businessman who ran a nursing home in Cabuyao, Laguna, police said yesterday. Yoshio Ichimura, president of Fil-Geron Philippines Private Nursing Home, died en route to a hospital after he was shot Saturday night while riding in a jeep with his Filipina girlfriend and driver, regional police head Chief Superintendent Jesus Verzosa said. He was shot in the head with a .45 caliber pistol shortly after the jeep pulled to a halt at an unmanned police checkpoint in the nearby town of Calamba. Ichimura's companions were unhurt, police reported. Verzosa said he ordered a manhunt for the gunman. *AP*

Muslim trader rescued

SECURITY forces have rescued a Muslim businessman who was kidnapped in Lanao del Sur last week and arrested four suspects, a regional military official said yesterday. Sultan Jamail Rogong was rescued late Sunday and four of his kidnappers detained when their vehicle ran into a government checkpoint near the town of Malabang, Marine Brig. Gen. Ben Dolorfino said. "We recovered the victim alive and safe last night," Dolorfino told reporters yesterday. Rogong was abducted on April 7 and the gang demanded P1.5 million in ransom. After negotiations between the kidnappers and the victim's family failed, the military was tipped off that the captive would be moved from Paulas town to Ganassi town, leading to the rescue. *AFP*

IBP confab sets in Baguio

THE Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) is scheduled to hold its 10th annual convention in Baguio from April 19 to 23. IBP president Jose Anselmo Cadiz said more than 5,000 leaders of the legal community were expected to attend the convention, which will be held at the CAP-John Hay Convention Center. The theme of the convention—"Alleviating Poverty and Resolving the Fiscal Crisis: Challenges for the Legal System"— underscores the resolve of the legal community to take an active role in addressing the most pressing issues in the country, according to Cadiz. He said that while poverty and fiscal issues "appear to be mostly economic in nature, there is a lot that the legal system can do to address them." Part of this effort is to look at how the legal system is dealing with corruption, which contributes a lot to poverty and the fiscal deficit, Cadiz said.

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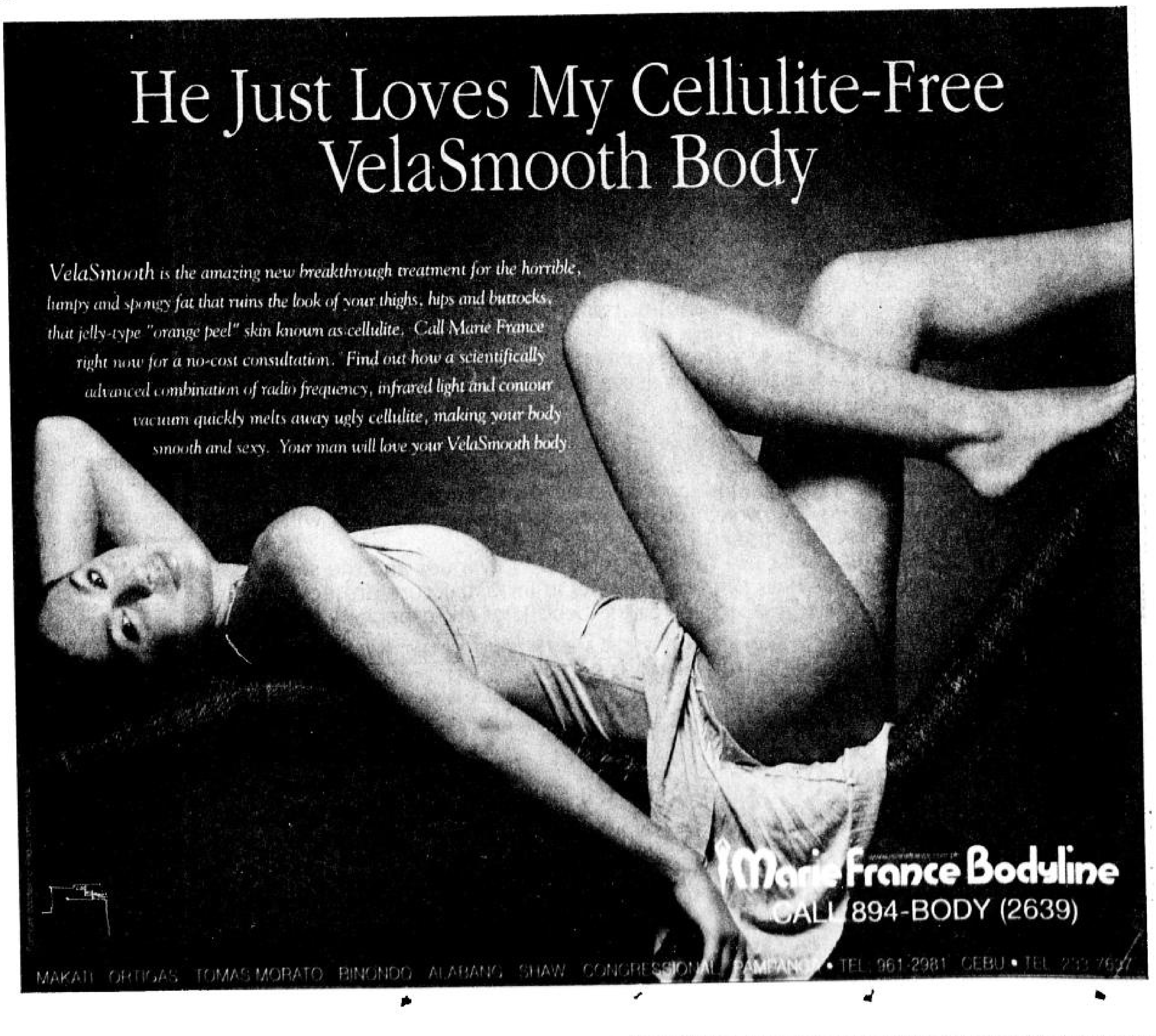

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COPW UPDATE NO. 7

IMPORTANT ISSUES TO CONSUMERS

As we prepare for our annual medical check-up and working holiday, we want to update you on what we have done as regards various issues that affect the consuming public.

CAP AND ITS PLANHOLDERS:
With respect to the anxiety of parents who had to advance the tuition fees of their children due to unpaid payments of CAP, we are in complete agreement with SEC Chairperson Barin that CAP must inform *immediately* the parents on when and how funds will be made available to take care of the total annual tuition fees up to School Year 2010.

We have likewise submitted to both the Senate and the House Committees on Banks and Financial Intermediaries and to Party-list Rep. Loretta Rosales our findings on CAP to serve as inputs to the proposed bill establishing the Pre-Need Code of the Philippines.

THE VAT BILL:
Our appeal to Congress: The VAT bill must be passed, must cover all sectors except for agricultural products in their original state, and must be fair and equitable to ALL especially to the poor.

We met individually in the last day of the special session with Senate President Drilon, Senators Recto, Arroyo, Santiago, Enrile and Osmeña. They gave the assurance that the Senate will approve the VAT bill on April 13th, hold a bicameral conference and approve a *SINGLE VAT* rate on April 15th or at the latest, the week ending April 23rd.

DOE-DOJ TASK FORCE:
COPW spoke to DOE Secretary Rafael Lotilla and DOJ Secretary Raul Gonzales. They assured us that the DOE-DOJ Task Force will be reactivated to enforce Section 14(d) of the Oil Deregulation Law which states that any report from any person of an unreasonable rise in the prices of petroleum products shall immediately be acted upon within 30 days.

This is of utmost urgency as the consuming public will want to find out the basis for the price increase in the light of escalating World prices.

THE WORLD MUST REDUCE OIL CONSUMPTION TO PREVENT WORLD OIL PRICES FROM SKYROCKETING
There is a need for the industrialized countries in particular the U.S., Europe, and China and other countries to reduce oil consumption by 1 to 2 percent. If this is done, then the prices of petroleum will taper off because supply will begin to exceed demand.
The price in the region for diesel and gasoline is very volatile due to tight supply and little production capacity as evidenced by the increase in diesel by $4.69 from $68.86 to $73.55 per barrel and the increase in gasoline by $4.11 from $59.77 to $63.88 per barrel from March 31 to April 4th or *IN A SPAN OF JUST FOUR DAYS*.

WE NEED TO IMPLEMENT NOW AN ENERGY CONSERVATION PROGRAM
The government has taken the initiative in calling an emergency meeting on Energy Conservation in Malacañang, chaired by Exec. Sec. Eduardo Ermita with DTI Secretary Juan Santos, DOE Secretary Rafael Lotilla and 30 business organizations in attendance.

The meeting stressed the need to conserve on fuel because oil prices have gone up by 60%, compounded by the increase in the raw material cost of the agricultural and manufacturing sectors by an average of 35%. This has resulted in the following:

UNDUE PRESSURE ON THE $: Foreign exchange reserves, most of which is coming from remittances of OFWs, may likely trigger the depreciation of the peso.

INCREASE IN PRICES: Transport fares which will have to be increased will make the labor sector ask for a wage increase which will have a domino effect on hauling and shipping charges resulting in the increase in the prices of basic commodities.

Our appeal is for the labor sector to accept an increase in COLA instead of a wage increase because of the difficult times the manufacturing sector is going through.

WE NEED TO MAKE THE NECESSARY SACRIFICES
There is a need for all of us to brace and face tough times ahead.
April and May are the most crucial months in view of the record high oil prices and the passage of the VAT.
Therefore, to reduce our energy consumption, we must do the following:

- Shopping malls to close every Monday for two months.
- Factories to implement a 4-day work week from Monday to Thursday, extending the working time to 12 hours, including a one-hour lunch break.
  The DOLE agreed to immediately prepare the guidelines on the 4-day work week.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE
With the approval of the VAT bill, we expect the worst to be over. Passage of the VAT bill signals that the government can put its fiscal house in order.

- There will be renewed foreign and local investor confidence.
- Banks will be convinced to lower interest rates since the government will no longer be a credit risk.
- Therefore, government must use the additional VAT revenues and the savings from lower interest payments to invest heavily in infrastructure projects, to include schools, hospitals, education, for the benefit of all, especially the poor.

CONSIDERING THE URGENCY AND GRAVITY OF MANY ISSUES, WE WILL KEEP OUR CONSUMERS POSTED ON THE DEVELOPMENTS.

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FPJ widow drops poll protest case

From page A1

"inaccurate" and "unacceptable," she "no longer intends to avail [herself] of the final and ultimate remedy of the motion for reconsideration."

Sheer technicality

But for "posterity," Roces went on to hit the ruling which, she said, was based "not on merits ... but based on sheer technicality ... thereby sealing the truth forever."

She said the PET clearly opted to delve on the technicalities rather than ascertaining the "true will of the electorate" by letting the case go to its fruitful conclusion.

The court, she said, "opted to take the simple and easy way out by deciding to go technical ... as if to wash its hands and just leave the true will of the Filipino people (expressed in the May elections) ... in limbo."

Presumptive President

This situation, she said, paved the way for a "presumptive (P)resident" to continue governing the country.

Although the court, according to her, chose the easy path to avoid instability, she warned that "such washing of hands and easy way out could readily serve as the very fuse for a continuing instability."

In its ruling, the court said it strove to resolve Poe's electoral protest "without further delay to prevent popular unrest and avoid destabilization at the highest level."

Muzzled

"To muzzle the people's voice, under the guise of procedural technicalities and imagined instability" is something that Roces "as lay person, most sincerely, could not comprehend," the actress said.

She also contested the court's decision to base its ruling on Rule 14 of the PET Rules.

It provides that "[o]nly the registered candidate of the President or Vice President of the Philippines who received the second and third highest number of votes may contest the election of the President or Vice President, as the case may be, by filing a verified petition with the clerk of the Presidential Electoral Tribunal within (30) days after the proclamation of the winner."

Roces said her husband had complied with this when he, "as the admitted second placer, filed his protest within 30 days from the proclamation of the protestee."

Roces said she also could not understand why the court "effectively precluded anyone and everyone" from substituting for her "now."

The actress suffered another defeat, this time at the Sandiganbayan.

The antigraft court yesterday denied the request of lawyer Rene Saguisag to allow Roces to visit deposed President Joseph Estrada, who is detained in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, on plunder charges. The late husband of Roces was a close friend of Estrada's.

Unexpected PNP objection

The Sandiganbayan's decision came although prosecution lawyers did not object to the proposed visit. The Philippine National Police; however, unexpectedly opposed the proposal.

The court said denying the motion was its best recourse owing to the PNP's manifestation that it could not guarantee Estrada's safety with 42 people around.

Justices Francisco Villaruz, Diosdado Peralta and Rodolfo Ponferrada ruled that they were bound to "believe" the position taken by PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, who said that more celebrity guests would mean more policemen and more funds.

This was the first time in four years that police custodians of Estrada had opposed a request of his lawyers.

The PNP, in its objection, said the national police could ill-afford to deploy more policemen to control the crowd that would come to see the celebrity visitors of Estrada, due to the ongoing antiterror campaign and the funds needed to move additional PNP personnel for any situation that may arise during the proposed visit.

4M crank calls swamp Patrol 117 every year

From page A1

majority of the calls.

Now the bad news: Its 30 nationwide call centers receive an average of four million crank calls a year.

"I've been receiving complaints that nobody answers when they call 117. This is because the calls are on queue. If there are a lot of calls, there will be a delay in answering them," said Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes at a news conference yesterday.

Because of the incredible number of crank calls they receive, the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Patrol 117 Commission will now charge P5.50 per call and P2.50 per text message.

Better education

"When the public is better educated on the use of the 117 hotline, then we can do away with the charges," Reyes said.

The Foundation for Crime Prevention (FCP), one of the prime movers of Patrol 117, said calling 117 from public phone booths would still be free.

Pay phone booths intended for 117 calls are also strategically located around Metro Manila. These phones, the FCP said, were monitored to verify the identity and sincerity of callers.

To further sift the crank calls from real emergency calls, the DILG and the FCP launched Club 117, whose members are expected to report crimes and other emergencies via the 117 hotline.

With the members' profiles and unique numbers, operators will skip one step in verifying the emergency being reported.

"This is our way of involving everyone, especially the youth in the reporting and monitoring aspect of the national anticrime campaign. We are also continuously developing ways and means to maximize the technological capabilities of 117," said Reyes.

FCP officials said concerned citizens could become members by registering by text. Type: CLUB REG <NAME> <AGE> <LOCATION> and send to 117.

Privileges

Club 117 has a number of privileges for those who fill up membership forms from the FCP and secure ID cards. The forms can be downloaded from www.fcp117.com.ph or requested by fax from the FCP through tel. 889-5013.

The ID card bears a corresponding number for the member, much like the national numbers system proposed by the DILG.

Asked if Club 117 falls neatly into place with the government's proposed national identification system, Reyes said: "Of course. The second level of membership already requires the filling up of application forms and that will help in coming up with the (national ID) database."

"After our soft launch a week ago, at least 1,000 persons have already signified an interest to join the club. We expect an increase in numbers as the launching activity will kick off our seminar-workshops, training programs and lecture series initially in Metro Manila and in the country's key cities," said Celerina Rosales-Amores, FCP executive director.

Club members enjoy discounts on food purchases at Wendy's restaurants, Paparazzi vests, and courses at the Emergency Resource Center and the Taekwondo Training Center.

Movie premiers, seminars, lectures and other forums will also be offered to members on a first-come first-served basis. Weekly updates on crime prevention, first aid, emergency preparedness and related data will be made available to the members via text messaging.

Former bank president found dead; suicide eyed

From page A1

BORLONGAN

found Teodoro Borlongan, former Urban Bank president, lifeless in the driver's seat of his Nissan Pathfinder pickup.

That was the account of the circumstances surrounding the death of Borlongan given to the INQUIRER by a senior police official.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said parts of the account were based on police interviews with Borlongan's wife.

"Based on initial evidence, there was no foul play," the official said. "All evidence point to suicide," he said.

Borlongan, 49, had a bullet wound in the left temple.

A .45-cal. handgun and a letter police believed was a suicide note were found beside him, the official said.

Borlongan and the Urban Bank he built over 20 years of his life made headlines in April 2000 when it was hit by withdrawals which forced it to declare a bank holiday. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas ordered it closed the following day.

The bank's closure sparked a spate of lawsuits.

Flowers for the dead

Police said that shortly before noon yesterday, cemetery caretakers saw Borlongan carrying flowers.

"*Nakita siya ng mga caretakers na nag*-offer *ng* flower *sa mga namatay niyang kamag-anak* (They saw him placing flowers at his dead relatives' graves)," the official said.

He also called his wife on the phone and told her how much he loved her, according to the official.

'I love you'

"*Sabi niya, 'Paalam, mahal kita'* (He said, 'Goodbye, I love you')," the official said.

Just hours before he was found dead, Borlongan apparently sent a friend an e-mail. It was sent at 9:59 a.m.

The e-mail came from the address: tcborl@yahoo.com."

A friend of Borlongan's forwarded it to the Urban Bank e-group composed of former bank staff members.

It passed from one hand to another, the sender asking for prayers for Borlongan.

A copy of the e-mail was sent by a banker to the INQUIRER. It read in part: "God asked me to do right. I struggled for what was right ... but stood alone. My unbearable fear, burden and pain for the sake of others and my family I shared only with God."

It also said: "I finished my race; I fought my good fight; I did not give up; I kept my faith." *With PDI Research*

(Below is the e-mail which, according to colleagues of banker Teodoro Borlongan, he had sent to a friend before he was found dead yesterday):

From: Ted Borlongan [mailto:tcborl@yahoo.com]

.....

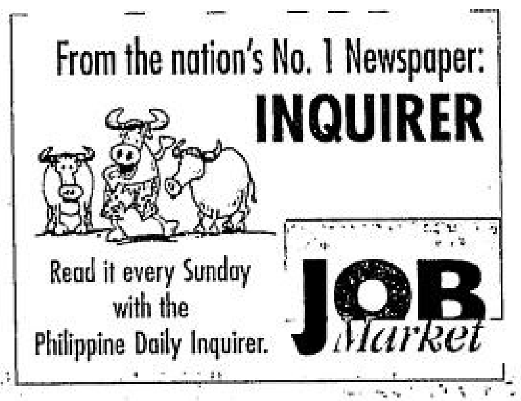
Subject: My prayer

GOD asked me to wait; I endured. God asked me to do right; I struggled for what was right. I kept strong outside, but stood alone. My unbearable fear, burden and pain for the sake of others and my family, I shared only with God.

O where is Justice? Where is Truth? Where is Compassion? It is Your face Lord, I truly seek. If not now, then after this lifetime. If not here, then in Your kingdom.

I finished my race; I fought my good fight; I did not give up; I kept my faith. Yet death may still bear meaning or purpose for others, if not our lives.

Lord, look upon us with mercy and love in our last moments of human frailty. Let me sing You praise and glory forever in Your house.



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Drilon warns Asean states of risking credibility

By TJ Burgonio and Connie E. Fernandez

SENATE President Franklin Drilon yesterday warned that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations risked losing its credibility if Burma were allowed to assume the chairmanship of the regional grouping next year.

"Asean may lose its credibility should Myanmar assume its chairmanship in 2006," Drilon said, in reaction to reports that Burma's leaders have insisted on chairing Asean despite pressure from the United States.

Echoing Drilon, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who led moves for the inclusion of the issue in last week's Inter-Parliamentary Union conference, said Burma's impending chairmanship bodes badly for the group's moral standing.

"It will reduce the moral standing of Asean as a respected and promoter of human rights, especially because we already know that the European Union and the US are not keen on Myanmar (other name of Burma) assuming the chair of Asean," Pimentel told reporters.

Drilon further cautioned Burma against ignoring calls to drop its chairmanship of the group, saying it also risked facing isolation as well as economic sanctions from the international community.

Pimentel urged President Macapagal-Arroyo and Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo to "use the option of consensus" in convincing other countries to block Burma's chairmanship of Asean.

"Because Asean is built on consensus ... If there's anyone that disagrees that Myanmar can assume the chairmanship, that means Myanmar cannot assume [chairmanship]," Pimentel said.

For his part, Speaker Jose de Venecia proposed a "unity government," Philippine-style, in Burma to "help bring about a negotiated political settlement."

De Venecia wrote a letter addressed to Romulo on April 7, asking him to include his suggestion during the Asean Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Cebu.

"Our proposal is for both sides to create a unity government, under a power sharing formula, to hasten the process of putting Myanmar firmly on the path of democracy," said De Venecia, who has been credited for his Rainbow Coalition in the House, which has brought together legislators from different political parties to work for administration-back measures.

The Burma issue was sidelined during last week's IPU assembly in Manila, but the IPU Committee on Human Rights approved a resolution calling for the establishment of an Asean inter-parliamentary caucus calling for the respect of democracy and human rights in Burma.

FOREIGN ministers of the member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations join hands in a gesture of unity at the start of their annual meeting in Cebu City. From left: Kantahi Suphamongkhon of Thailand; Nguyen Dy Nien of Vietnam; Prince Mohamed Bolkiah of Brunei; Hor Namhong of Cambodia; Nur Wirajuda of Indonesia, Asean chair; Somsavat Lengsavat of Laos; Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Albar of Malaysia; U Nyan Win of Burma; Alberto Romulo of the Philippines; George Yong-Boon Yeo of Singapore, and Ong Keng Yong, Asean secretary. AFP

Asean foreign ministers split on Burma role

From page A1

The junta could opt to save face by relinquishing the chairmanship and saying they were busy on the "road map," which includes talks on drawing up a new constitution to replace the one that had been condemned internationally as a sham.

If they ignored the criticism and maintained the status quo, the whole of Asean risked losing credibility with its Western partners, the diplomat said.

Burma Foreign Minister U Nyan Win rejected the European Union and United States calls to give up the Asean chairmanship as he arrived in Cebu on Saturday for the retreat.

"That is their attitude, not ours. We can decide ourselves because we are an independent country," U Nyan Win told reporters.

Asked if he felt his country's record on human rights and democracy qualified it to chair Asean, he said: "This is our responsibility. This is all the Asean (members') attitude."

Sacred principle

A senior diplomat from Laos, who is chairing the retreat, said Asean could not risk abandoning its smaller members because of Western dictates and he did not expect it would break from tradition by refusing Burma the chairmanship.

"I think everybody knows that the rotation is [followed] every time," the official said.

"I don't really think there will be concurrent drastic change from the principle," he added, noting that since Asean was founded in 1967, none of its members had abdicated the chairmanship.

"If Myanmar gives up, Myanmar will not follow the principle. There has been no precedent so far. Since 1967, I have not seen any country that had to skip over its chairmanship. I think that principle is very important, very sacred," he said.

Laos chairs Asean until July this year, then it passes the baton to Malaysia.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo on Sunday said he expected "vigorous debates" over Burma amid continued pressure from the West.

He likened the issue to a long courtship, with Asean having to coax Rangoon to eventually gently give way.

Singapore sling

A Thai diplomat told reporters yesterday that "Myanmar has sent some positive signals that it would not trouble Asean on the issue of chairmanship," which could be a way out of a controversy over its human rights record.

"It has said it would take Asean's views into consideration and uphold the interest of the grouping," the official said, adding that Burma had been influenced by Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who visited there last week.

Singapore and several other Asean members have shown signs of impatience with Rangoon's slow reform progress, in a rare break of the group's long-held principle of non-interference in members' internal affairs.

As the biggest investor in Burma, Singapore has more clout than most of its neighbors in exerting influence over Burma's ruling generals.

3 options

A Filipino diplomat said there were three options for resolving the dispute.

"It's either they (Burma) stay by making compromises or they voluntarily give up the chairmanship."

He said the third and most difficult option would be sticking to the status quo.

Rangoon has promised to bring the country back to democracy through a series of reforms based on a seven-stage road map laid out in 2003 by former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt, who was purged last October.

Foreign pressure

But Europe and the United States have shunned Burma and slapped sanctions on Rangoon since the military government's latest detention of opposition leader Suu Kyi in May 2003.

The Burma issue has overshadowed other Asean business at the three-day retreat.

The foreign ministers were also due to tackle yesterday the possible expansion of the East Asian community, responding to interest from Australia, New Zealand and India to join the 10 Southeast Asian states, China, Japan and South Korea at an annual summit in December in Malaysia.

Asean is comprised of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

AFP, Reuters

Senate caucus on VAT

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SENATORS yesterday proposed amendments to the value-added tax (VAT) measure behind closed doors—in a caucus in the senators' lounge and not in open session as it should be.

"We are discussing the possible individual amendments line by line," Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said in a text message at 6 p.m., an hour after the senators suspended the first day of the session and locked themselves up in the lounge where they take their meals.

"It is faster in the caucus," Pangilinan said in explaining the unorthodox procedure.

He said that by 6 p.m., the senators were discussing amendments to page 6 of the 34-page committee report of the Senate ways and means committee, which is chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto. The amendment were proposed by individual senators.

In the past weeks, the Senate leadership had "instituted" the caucus method in trying to resolve disagreements over the VAT bill and hasten its passage.

In one such caucus before the Holy Week, opposition Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile walked out complaining that senators should discuss the provisions in the session hall for the record.

The debates should be held out in the open and recorded for reference in the future when the implementation of the law is questioned before the court, according to Enrile and other opposition senators.

"We will, however, ensure that when we vote on the individual amendments on the floor, we will allow any senator to raise issues and explain his or her vote so that the record is clear as to the intent of Congress," Pangilinan said in a text message.

Exempting the power sector from VAT and putting in the "no pass through" provision are emerging as the major amendments being introduced in the Senate version of the expanded VAT bill.

The period of individual amendments is the last hurdle prior to its approval.

Discussions on the VAT were also delayed by almost one hour over senators' objections on actions and statements by some United States officials.

VAT support tied to antigraft drive . . .

From page A1

contrary to the prevailing notion that the public was adverse to any rate increase, only a minority or 38 percent said increasing taxes now was unjustified.

"This response did not differ significantly across the class groups and areas. This results run against an extreme perception by some observers that the entire population will always be opposed to any increase in taxes," Tabunda said.

Low awareness

While the survey was conducted during the final two weeks of Congress when the VAT bill was at the center of Senate deliberations, Pulse Asia noted that the majority of Filipinos were still clueless about the VAT rate increase. The survey showed that nearly seven out of 10 Filipinos "have little or almost no awareness of the proposal."

Only 10 percent claimed to have a great deal of knowledge of the VAT reforms, while 25 percent said they were familiar with the revenue measure although their knowledge was still insufficient.

"This suggests that the public lacks information regarding the solutions that the government has proposed notwithstanding congressional hearings, media coverage of politicians, and exhortation from the administration," Tabunda said.

Mirroring the declining confidence in President Arroyo, the survey showed "a significant degree of public skepticism over the Arroyo administration's earlier public reassurances that it had the fiscal situation well in hand."

Success factor

Close to five out of 10 respondents disagreed that the government has already succeeded in staving off the fiscal crises, with 30 percent undecided, the results showed.

This finding was bolstered when less than a third of the respondents (30 percent) said they believed that the government had an effective program to deal with the fiscal and debt crisis which was a significant drop from its level of 37 percent in October 2004 survey.

The survey also noted a split among respondents on whether they thought the fiscal crisis was just an excuse to get ordinary people to accept higher taxes.

On this point, the government has only itself to blame.

"This response pattern suggests that a sizable number of Filipinos do not seem to recognize the gravity of the fiscal problem due in no small measure to the administration's own varying assessment of the problem," Tabunda said.

Executive-legislative

"On several occasions, the administration has flip-flopped between warning the public about the existence of the fiscal crisis and declaring that the fiscal crisis is over," he said. President Arroyo declared the crisis over less than three months after admitting that her government was in dire fiscal straits.

The survey showed that more than a third of the respondents (37 percent) believed the President and Congress had not been cooperating effectively to address the fiscal crisis. Only a fourth of the respondents believed they were working harmoniously on the vital tax bill.

"The survey conveys the picture of a public made aware of the problem of the fiscal crisis and debt crisis to some extent, but which harbors serious doubts about whether the government is addressing the matter effectively or is considering the people's deepest apprehension in its plans," Tabunda said.

PCA chief under fire for blocking P8.4-B coco project

From page A1

tens of billions of pesos, was collected from coconut farmers during the Marcos regime.

Project in every province

Valbuena said she was recommending that the government put up a project worth at least P50 million in each coconut-producing province to directly benefit the farmers.

Since Holy Week, Yap has been asking her to meet with officials of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) represented by Ed Lim.

"I refused to go into small meetings, especially if it involves billions of pesos, to avoid any ambiguities. I want transparency, the shareholders—the farmers groups and the PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government) chair (Haydee) Yorac should always be present," Valbuena said.

Valbuena said the PCA board of directors scrapped the Agusan project at a meeting on March 28. Yap, chair of the board, was not at the meeting.

No pressure

Yap said he was not pressuring Valbuena to approve and support the Agusan project. "I challenge her to prove that I am pressuring here," he told reporters.

He confirmed reports that Malacañang was evaluating the performance of Valbuena as PCA administrator.

"I have submitted my recommendations, but I refuse to discuss it. It's an internal matter," Yap said.

The agriculture secretary said Valbuena had submitted a report on the project but he said he could not yet say if he would approve it.

5 municipalities

The Agusan Reserve Area Development Project will be established by PCA, the United Coconut Planters Bank-CIIF oil mills and the UCPB-CIIF Finance and Development Corp. (Cocofinance), according to PCA documents.

The PCA Reserve Area for the production of hybrid coconuts will cover 110,000 hectares and straddle five municipalities. The project will be in the undeveloped and mountainous lands of Agusan del Sur.

The indicative investment requirements are estimated at P8.4 billion to be derived from the coconut levy fund, according to the CIIF Oil Mills Group proposal.

The CIIF said the project could generate P32 billion over 25 years and support 70,000 farming families.

The Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment Foundation Inc. (Peace Foundation) said it was not supportive of the Agusan project because the coconut farmers—who own the levy funds—were not involved or would not even be shareholders of the project.

"They perceive that the project would be similar to the Hacienda Luisita management wherein the farmers will be reduced to mere workers and not co-owners," Peace Foundation president Steve Quiambao said.

He said the arrangement would mean that the management of the levy would again revert to the UCPB and not to the farmers.

Governors against project

The governors' league has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo and Yap not to pursue the plan to use the P8.4 billion in coconut levy funds for one project.

The League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP), during its 5th general assembly in Tagbilaran City on Friday and Saturday, passed a resolution opposing the plan of the Department of Agriculture and the PCA to invest the fund from the CIIF to develop a coconut seeds producing center in Agusan del Sur.

Valbuena, who was allowed to speak before the governors, explained that the project would focus on developing hybrid coconuts.

"But the governors were not convinced," LPP president and Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado said.

Aumentado said it was ironic that the project would be implemented in Agusan del Sur, which is not a coconut-producing province.

The distribution of coconut seedlings to other provinces would be expensive as Agusan del Sur does not even have a seaport, he said.

Putting all the money in creating one coconut seed center would also mean that coconut farmers in coconut-producing provinces would be deprived of their share of the coconut levy, according to Aumentado.

"So, we agreed that instead of concentrating the hybrid coconut seed production in Agusan del Sur, this should be divided among the different coconut-producing provinces where most of the coconut farmers are based," the governor said.

Similar to Bugsuk project

Aumentado said the fund should be used to put up nurseries in all the coconut-producing provinces, including Bohol, which is considered the country's 10th biggest coconut-producing province.

Aumentado said Cotabato Gov. Manny Piñol pointed out during their meeting that a similar project was undertaken in Bugsuk, Palawan, during the Marcos regime, but this did not succeed because of the inaccessibility of the place.

The Bohol governor promised to submit the resolution personally to Ms Arroyo during the National Economic and Development Authority meeting on Tuesday in Malacañang. The LPP will also furnish the DA and PCA with its resolution.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Protestant preachers go hi-tech

By Christian V. Esguerra

POP GO the pastors.

Don't look now, but Filipino preachers have gone high tech in their missionary work.

You can now see the latest cell phone models, pocket PCs, laptops and projectors alongside the Bible and other regular preaching materials among many pastors in the country's 50,000 evangelical and Protestant churches.

"We really have to adjust with the times to make our message more relevant and effective," Bishop Efraim Tendero, president of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, told the INQUIRER in an interview.

This has been the trend the last five years, particularly in the 20,000 churches under Tendero's organization.

Missionaries apparently just can't rely on stage presence and God's message to encourage people to join or remain in Christ's fold, he said.

"People, especially the young, get bored so easily," he said in Filipino. "They have a very short attention span so we really have to work to make ourselves noticed."

Tendero pointed to the "main competition"—the media—which has long been criticized for dragging the people, especially the youth, away from books and libraries.

But the pastors would not be left behind.

A fixture in their lectures and seminars today are colorful PowerPoint presentations, complete with catchy graphics and music, the bishop said.

Pastors also carry with them the latest in high tech gizmos like Palm, Blackberry and laptop computers.

A necessity, for instance, in Tendero's preaching is his laptop containing templates of previous and upcoming lectures.

In evangelical schools, compact discs, projectors (like the more advanced 4-in-1 type) and the Internet are regular teaching aids, he said.

In a research project titled "The Church in the Philippines," German evangelist Dr. Manfred Kohl underscored the need for more technologically advanced teaching techniques.

"With the rapid explosion of electronic means of communication, teaching within the four walls will change drastically. Extension programs and part-time and evening studies in various locations must be the strategy of theological institutions of the future," Kohl said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, April 12, 2005
3rd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 7:51-8:1
Gospel: John 6:30-35

The people said to Jesus, "Show us miraculous signs, that we may see and believe you. What sign do you perform? Our ancestors ate manna in the desert; as Scripture says: They were given bread from heaven to eat."

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven. My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. The bread God gives is the One who comes from heaven and gives life to the world." And they said to him, "Give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall never be hungry, and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty."

Commentary

Stephen preaches hard, calling the people stubborn and hard of heart and he lists the long litany of how they are just like their ancestors. They turn against him, drag him from the city and stone him to death. Like his Master, Stephen cries out in praise of the Son of Man who sits at God's right hand and forgives his murderers as he dies, handing his spirit over to Jesus who is Lord of life. Jesus' audience still wants signs, like their ancestors in the desert who were fed manna, but Jesus claims that the bread his Father gives is true bread. And Jesus bluntly says: "I am the bread of life, and whoever comes to him will never hunger or thirst. Do we want this bread, of forgiveness and justice, of peace and communion with God and with one another? Or like our ancestors are we stubborn and hard of heart?

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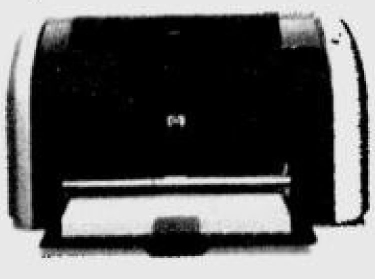

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Japan seeks dialogue amid Beijing rallies

Domestic dynamics drive Japan history feud with Asia

By Linda Sieg

TOKYO—A bitter feud between Japan and China over history textbooks that sparked massive anti-Japanese protests over the weekend could grow angrier as domestic dynamics in both countries make finding solutions difficult.

The protests in Beijing and two southern cities were the latest eruption of anger sparked by the Japanese Education Ministry's approval of school textbooks that many Chinese view as whitewashing Japan's wartime atrocities and its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The textbook approval and a territorial dispute over two tiny islands have also provoked outrage in South Korea, chilling relations which until recently had been improving.

Most Japanese accept that Japan caused pain and suffering to its Asian neighbors with its militarist aggression but many have been puzzled by the latest harsh reactions in South Korea and in China—the latter already on Japan's radar as a rival for regional leadership. The outbursts risk provoking a backlash that could strengthen right-leaning ruling politicians, analysts said.

"The majority of Japanese understand very, very well that China and Korea have legitimate moral grievances," said Andrew Horvat, Japan representative for the US-based Asia Foundation.

"But the politicization in China and Korea of their grievances gets Japanese backs up and makes them feel that they are being pilloried," he said.

Relations with China soured after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi took office in 2001 and began visits to a Tokyo shrine where war criminals are honoured along with Japanese war dead.

Many analysts said then that the move was aimed at winning votes from a powerful veterans' group and that Koizumi had paid little heed to foreign policy fallout.

Beijing and Tokyo are also locked in territorial feuds including one over Chinese gas exploration in a disputed area of the East China Sea and are eyeing each other's defense strategies with mutual mistrust.

While Tokyo seems anxious to soothe South Korea's anger in a year when both countries have prepared to celebrate the 40th anniversary of normalizing diplomatic ties, underlying suspicion and rivalry make it harder to seek a way out with China.

"I think at the moment, both sides (Tokyo and Beijing) have got their backs up and think that sounding tough is the answer," said Gerald Curtis, a political science professor at New York's Columbia University.

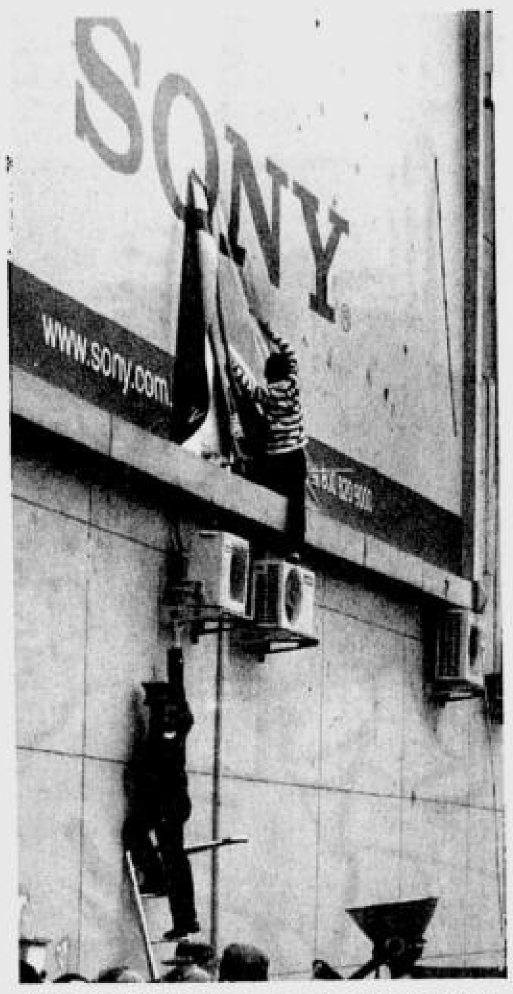
The feuds come at a delicate time for regional security, as China and the United States and its Asian allies try to coax North Korea back to stalled talks on dismantling its nuclear arms program.

Japan's approval of the textbooks has also come under fire from domestic critics, reflecting a deep divide in public opinion over how history is presented in schools.

"The condition is not collective amnesia. It is domestic schizophrenia that is hurting Japan," Horvat said.

Proponents of the most controversial textbook argue that references to military sex slaves, the Nanjing Massacre and forced labor by people from Korea and Taiwan constituted a "masochistic" view of history devoid of pride and patriotism.

An initial version of the textbook approved in 2001 was adopted by only a tiny number of schools, although a shift in public sentiment may mean it fares better this time. *Reuters*



A POLICEMAN tries to reach a man tearing down a Sony billboard as thousands took to the streets of Guangzhou, in southern China April 10 to protest Japan's refusal to deal with its wartime past. AFP

BEIJING—Riot police were guarding Japan's diplomatic missions in Beijing Monday as an uneasy calm descended after violent weekend protests sparked calls from Tokyo for dialogue to address worsening relations.

Members of the paramilitary People's Armed Police wearing helmets were positioned in front of the embassy and the ambassador's residence, which had both been targeted by angry mobs.

"We don't bring our police force, we've repeatedly asked the Chinese to protect us," said Ide Keiji, a spokesperson of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing.

He said there had been no attacks on Japan's diplomatic missions in Beijing Monday.

The Japanese consulate in the southwestern municipality of Chongqing said everything was "normal," while a witness in the southern city of Guangzhou reported no attacks on Japanese interests there.

Staff members at Japan's consulate in Shanghai declined comment, while no one answered the phone at the consulate in the northeastern city of Shenyang.

At the Japanese school in Beijing, local police were posted outside, while private security guards were patrolling inside the walls.

"The security has always been strict," said a school official.

The quiet followed two days of irate crowds running amok in several cities, including Beijing where they hurled bottles, cans and stones at the Japanese Embassy and the ambassador's residence.

In Tokyo, Japan called for dialogue to ensure relations with its key economic partner do not deteriorate further.

"We have to work hard to prevent mutual misunderstanding from growing," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told reporters.

"Right now we are exchanging our views through diplomatic channels."

Japan on Sunday summoned the Chinese ambassador and demanded compensation and an apology over the demonstration in Beijing.

China's foreign ministry said Sunday it was not responsible for the state of Sino-Japanese relations, blaming worsening ties on Japan's failure to atone for its wartime past.

The lull Monday was the Chinese government showing the limits of its tolerance toward overt expression of public discontent, according to Shi Yinhong, an international relations expert at Beijing's People's University.

"The government always wants to at one hand take a permissive attitude, but at the same time they're worried about too much release of this anger," he said.

The weekend protests developed from a relatively limited demonstration among students in Beijing against Tokyo's decision to allow school textbooks allegedly whitewashing World War II-era Japanese crimes in Asia. *AFP*

THE NEWLYWEDS
A Clarence House official handout photo of the Prince of Wales and his new bride Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, in the White Drawing Room at Windsor Castle April 9, after their wedding ceremony. AFP PHOTO POOL /CLARENCE HOUSE - HUGO BURNAND

Health teams race to track new Marburg cases

UIGE, Angola—Epidemiologists in the northern Angolan town of Uige are working overtime to trace new cases of the deadly Marburg virus, which has claimed nearly 200 lives and sparked panic in the war-devastated southern African nation.

Every morning, teams from the World Health Organization comb the town, devastated by a 27-year civil war, to try and pinpoint new cases of the haemorrhagic fever, which has so far infected 218 people and killed 193 in the world's worst outbreak.

"We visit our contacts and look for suspected cases," Francois Libama, a WHO epidemiologist told AFP as 4X4s set out to scan the derelict town, which still bears the scars of the bitter civil war which raged here until two years ago.

"If we find a suspected case, we call in the special teams to come and remove the body," Libama said as he drove to a home in Kakuia, a few kilometers from the center of the town, where a suspected case had been reported.

A few hours later, Libama, who has done similar work during three previous outbreaks of Ebola—a deadly virus similar to Marburg—checked on two Marburg "alerts" at homes where young children had died from causes other than the feared fever.

The team finds another home, where a family had previously lost a year-and-a-half old child to Marburg a week ago, empty.

"They have left, they have gone back to their village," an elderly neighbor said, that the family's village was more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) away from Uige through thick jungle.

"We have lost them," Lubama told AFP.

At the WHO's temporary headquarters in town, a blackboard paints a grim picture of the latest death toll in Uige, which stood at 173.

"Two corpses in Candombe Velho. Two corpses in Candombe-Novo. One alert in the Popular Quarter. One corpse at the cemetery," it said in Portuguese.

Funeral teams here have been met with fear and anger and also some superstition.

"There is a lot of superstition and witchcraft. For example doctor Alexandre Matombo, the Uige hospital director, has been accused by residents of causing the illness," Lubama told AFP.

Anthropologists meanwhile said the burial teams were being sensitized to local custom and tradition.

They proposed that a ritual washing of hands after a funeral be replaced by a symbolic washing with chlorinated water and that burial teams express condolences when they come to take away a body and allow the family to attend the burial.

"In Africa we celebrate the death of somebody," said Alain Epelboin, French anthropologist of the Paris-based National Centre for Scientific Research.

"With this epidemic there is a silence around the death ... we thought that we need to restore a kind of ritual," he told AFP.

"When somebody dies, I explain to the neighbors how the 'astronauts' are coming to take the body away," added Julienne Anoko, another anthropologist, referring to the burial team's full-body protective "Ebola" suits.

The Marburg virus, whose exact origin is unknown, spreads through contact with bodily fluids such as blood, excrement, vomit, saliva, sweat and tears, but can be contained with relatively simple health precautions, according to experts. *AFP*

China, India sign accord to resolve border dispute

NEW DELHI—India and China Monday signed a landmark accord aimed at resolving a boundary dispute that has bedevilled relations between the Asian giants for more than four decades, the Indian foreign ministry said.

The agreement, signed by India's national security advisor M.K. Narayanan and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo sets out the "guiding principles" to be followed in settling the China-India boundary dispute, a ministry statement said.

"The differences on the boundary question should not be allowed to affect the overall development of bilateral relations," the agreement, released by the ministry, says.

"The two sides will resolve the boundary question through peaceful and friendly consultations. Neither side shall use or threaten to use force against the other by any means.

"The final solution of the boundary question will significantly promote good neighborly and friendly relations between India and China," it said.

India and China will "make meaningful and mutually acceptable adjustments to their respective positions on the boundary question, so as to arrive at a package settlement to the boundary question," it added. *AFP*

PACHYDERM SHOWER
An elephant sprays water at young Thai revellers during the Songkran festival celebrations in Ayutthaya province, 80 km north of Bangkok April 11. The Songkran festival marks the start of the Thai traditional New Year on Wednesday. REUTERS

Brazil worries it may fight foreign powers for control of Amazon

By Angus MacSwan

MANAUS, Brazil—The Brazilian army has plenty to keep it busy in the Amazon jungle.

Drug smugglers, illegal loggers and miners, land grabbers, guerrillas and assorted gunmen all lurk in the untamed area which is larger than Western Europe and has 11,000 km of porous borders with seven countries.

However, the ultimate concern of Brazilian military strategists is that one day they might end up fighting a foreign power for control of the Amazon.

"The threats today are diverse. (One is) a superior military power to us and we have a strategy to resolve this," said Gen. Claudio Barbosa de Figueiredo, army commander for the Amazon region.

"Another great threat we consider is a power vacuum," he said in an interview at his headquarters on a military base in Manaus, a sweltering port city on the Rio Negro.

Since the end of the 1964-85 military dictatorship, defending the Amazon has become a priority for Brazil's army. In recent years it has built up its troop strength to 22,000 and plans to have 26,000 by the end of 2006, Figueiredo said.

Some 25 special frontier platoons with about 70 men each have been deployed in remote positions, he said.

The area is covered by the Amazon Vigilance System, a network of radars, computers and aircraft that looks for illegal air strips, incursions and environmental damage and which US defense chief Donald Rumsfeld visited last month.

The perceived threat that lurks at the back of many Brazilians' minds is that outsiders covet the Amazon, a fear fanned whenever a foreign politician talks about the forest and its waters as an international resource.

Indeed, former EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, now a candidate to head the World Trade Organization, in February proposed the Amazon should be designated "global public goods" and be administered by the international community—a proposal that drew a sharp rebuke from Brazilian government.

Brazil mounted a big Amazon exercise in November called Operation Ajuricaba involving 3,000 men, 35 planes and 170 boats. The enemy was a superior foreign military force.

"Brazilian armed forces planning for the hypothetical war in the Amazon region foresee the region turning into a new Vietnam," Correio Braziliense newspaper wrote. Diplomats also note with interest that Vietnam has just posted a defense attache to its embassy in Brasilia.

"The internationalization of the Amazon is one of the worries that takes us to this strategy of defense in relation to signs from big countries, not just the United States but also Europe," General Figueiredo said. "We must be prepared. After all, the Brazilian Amazon is Brazilian."

In 2003, top government aide Jose Dirceu said: "If the United States occupies Colombia, it will occupy the Amazon." *Reuters*

Governor of tsunami-hit Aceh convicted of graft

JAKARTA—An Indonesian court on Monday jailed the governor of tsunami-hit Aceh province for 10 years on corruption charges relating to the purchase of a Russian-made helicopter.

The trial of Abdullah Puteh was seen as a test of Indonesia's commitment to fight endemic graft and was the first heard in a new court set up to deal with high-profile corruption cases. The jail term was two years more than that sought by prosecutors.

"The defendant Abdullah Puteh has been proven guilty of the crime of corruption ... (The court) hands out a 10-year jail sentence," Krisna Menon, the presiding judge, told the corruption court.

Prosecutors had accused Puteh of buying the civilian helicopter without authorization in a 2001 deal that caused financial losses to the state. Puteh, who has repeatedly denied the charges, did not show up for the verdict because of ill health, his lawyers said. *Reuters*

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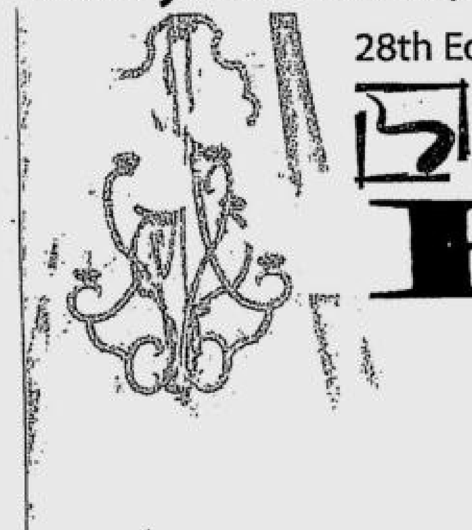

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Solution for overeating

WORD OF MOUTH
Sandy Daza

When the blue Xenical capsule first came out, it sold like hotcakes. It was the solution of many foodies for overeating.

Excuse

Believed to absorb and flush out fat, it provided an excuse for many to pig-out. But it is no longer as hot as it used to be. So, foodies are still on the lookout for something that will ease the guilt of a food trip, or lessen fat intake.

Before a recent steak meal, a friend gave me an enzyme tablet and two fiber capsules. The enzyme helps digest the food faster and the fiber helps absorb the fat, and is supposed to flush it out. I wasn't totally convinced, but it wasn't bad.

Just a couple of weeks ago, someone told me about this new fiber called C-Lium Fibre. Mix about a tablespoon in a glass of juice or water and drink it, then follow it up with another glass of water. After a day, the results are unbelievable. I was so impressed with the fiber that I kept telling everyone about.

Two glasses

Boy, it just cleans out your system. I was told that an experiment was done on it: They got two glasses half-filled with water and added oil to both, which of course floated on top. Then they added a certain brand of fiber to one glass and added C-Lium to the other. The fiber in the first glass almost disolved, while the C-Lium fiber absorbed the fat and swelled into a gel.

It doesn't claim to have any nutritional benefits, though I don't really care as long as it absorbs the fat. And because it swells up, it gives one the feeling of being slightly full so that you eat less. For regulaity of "visits" this is the perfect solution.

Other brands

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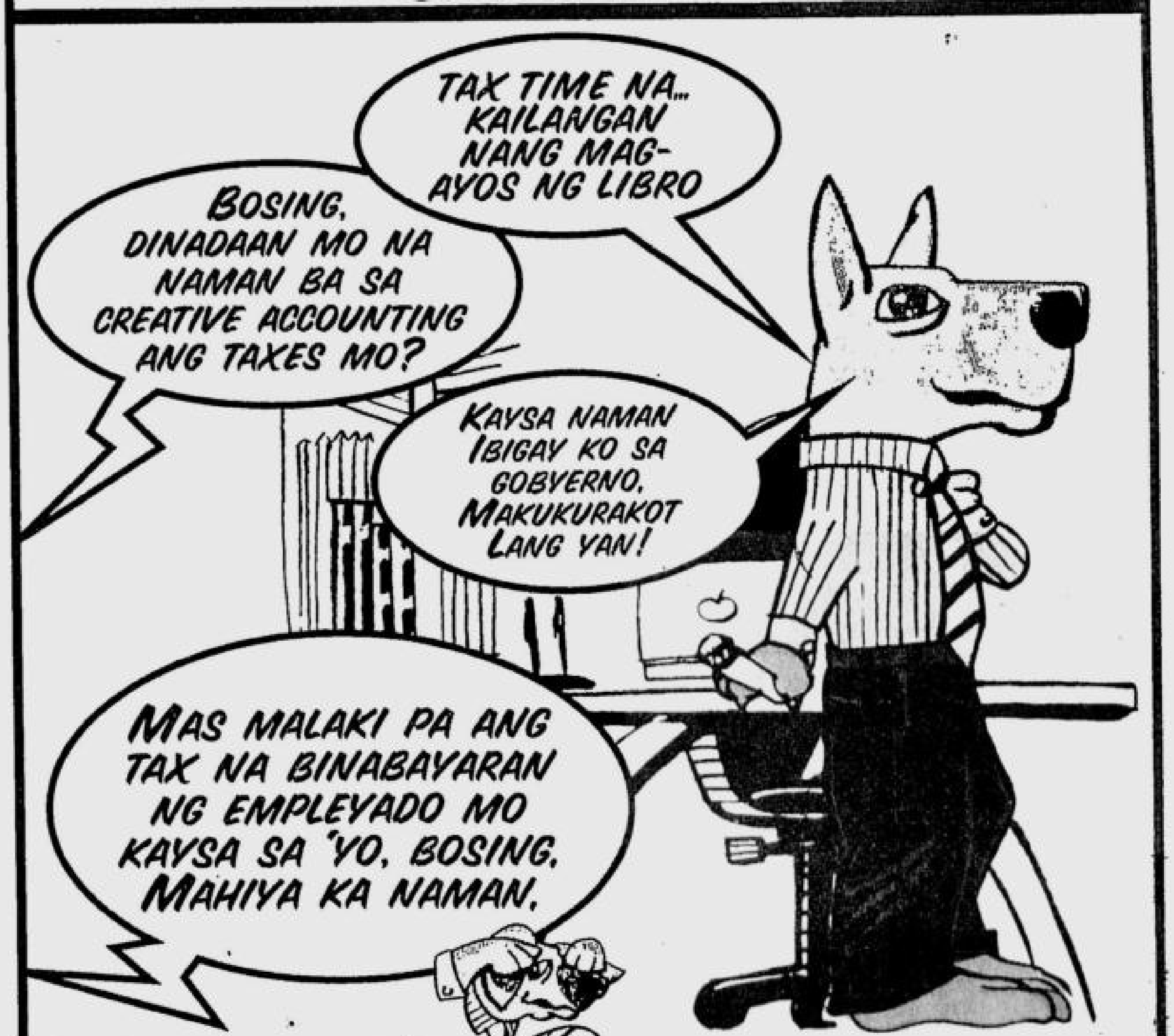

TAX TIME NA... KAILANGAN NANG MAG-AYOS NG LIBRO
BOSING, DINADAAN MO NA NAMAN BA SA CREATIVE ACCOUNTING ANG TAXES MO?
KAYSA NAMAN IBIGAY KO SA GOBYERNO, MAKUKURAKOT LANG YAN!
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PAY YOUR TAXES ON OR BEFORE APRIL 15, 2005

Operation R.A.T.E.
(Run After Tax Evaders)

*Batay sa umiiral na batas at regulasyon sa pabuya.

Strong quake hits Tokyo, reviving fears of 'Big One'

TOKYO—A major earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale rattled Tokyo as commuters headed to work early Monday, reviving fears of the dreaded "Big One" predicted to hit Japan in the future.

The quake was the biggest since a tremor of equal magnitude hit the Kanto region centering on Tokyo in June 2000, but there were no reports of major damage or casualties.

It struck at 7:22 a.m. Sunday, with the focus located 52 kilometers underground in the northeastern part of Chiba prefecture, some 100 kilometers east of Tokyo.

There was no danger of the quake causing tsuriami waves, the meteorological agency said.

The quake occurred in a geological hotbed of quakes, where powerful earthquakes registering 6.0 on the Richter scale or greater have taken place repeatedly, said Masahiro Yamamoto, monitoring chief of earthquakes and tsunamis at the agency.

But a major aftershock was unlikely, he said.

"Quakes may be felt from now on, but we believe (the possibility of a) tremor that could cause major damage would be very small," Yamamoto said.

A tremor of 4.4 on the Richter scale shook the eastern Japan at 3:38 p.m., focused in the northwestern part of Chiba prefecture, and was also felt in Tokyo. There was no report of damage.

"We believe the latest quake is not an aftershock of the morning quake," an agency official said. "It looks unlikely that this is a signal for a big tremor."

The initial quake delayed some high-speed bullet trains.

Several train services also were halted as a safety precaution, with stranded passengers seen getting off trains in the middle of rice paddies.

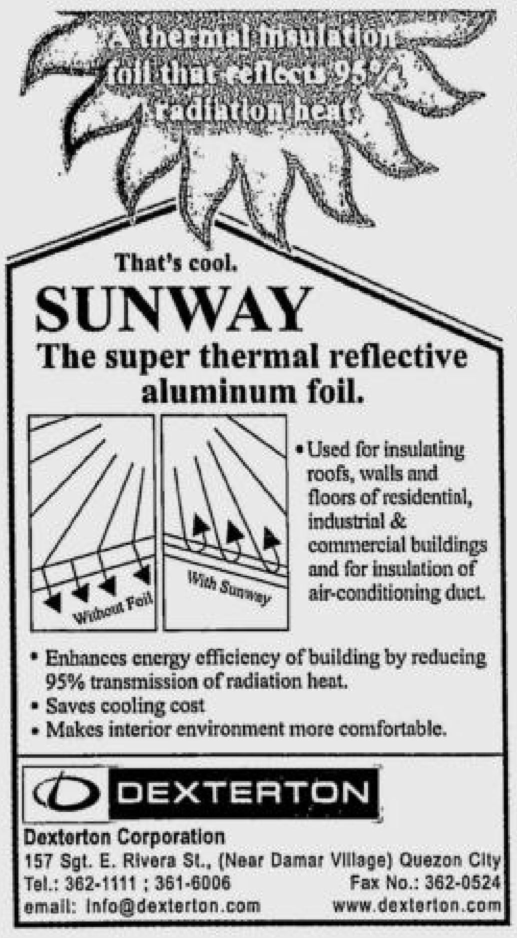
Operations at Narita airport, the main international airport for Tokyo in Chiba, were briefly suspended as a precaution.

Police in neighboring Ibaraki prefecture said they lowered the speed limit on expressways, but had no reports of accidents or damage.

Japan, which lies at the crossing of four tectonic plates, endures about 20 percent of the world's powerful earthquakes, frequently jolting Tokyo and other major cities where buildings are made to resist tremors.

The region most worried about a huge earthquake in the future is central Japan's Tokai, facing the Pacific, where a quake as intense as 8.0 on the Richter scale is feared.

A government panel said in February that if a quake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale were to hit the Tokyo region in the evening rush hour, it would kill 13,000 people and inflict $1.1 trillion in damage. *AFP*



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Bangladesh 9-story factory collapses; hundreds feared trapped under rubble

PALASHBARI, Bangladesh—Hundreds of factory workers are feared trapped under the rubble of a nine-story building that collapsed like a house of cards near Bangladesh's capital, survivors and witnesses said on Monday.

Rescuers dug out 11 bodies and pulled 55 people alive from the debris but narrow roads leading to the site delayed efforts to bring in cranes to help remove concrete slabs.

Anxious relatives joined rescuers searching for survivors in the twisted remains of the building at Palashbari, 30 km from Dhaka, which housed a garment factory. The victims were employees working a late Sunday shift.

"In a few minutes the entire structure crumbled like a house of cards," one witness told a private television channel.

One fireman said he had never seen such destruction.

"We suspect up to 500 people are under the debris. It was a packed night shift running ... and dozens may have died already," one survivor told reporters on the scene.

Police said the collapse was probably triggered by a boiler explosion at the factory. Fire brigade officials said they would investigate further to determine the exact cause.

Shahid Alam, a senior official of the Dhaka Development Authority, said the factory had been built on marshland despite a lack of planning permission.

Authorities called in extra police, army and paramilitary troops to bolster the rescue effort.

One small crane entered the site at noon and more were on their way, rescuers said.

Police and firefighters said the building collapsed about an hour after midnight.

Security officer Abdul Hye said at least 250 people had been working the night shift at Shahriar Fabrics.

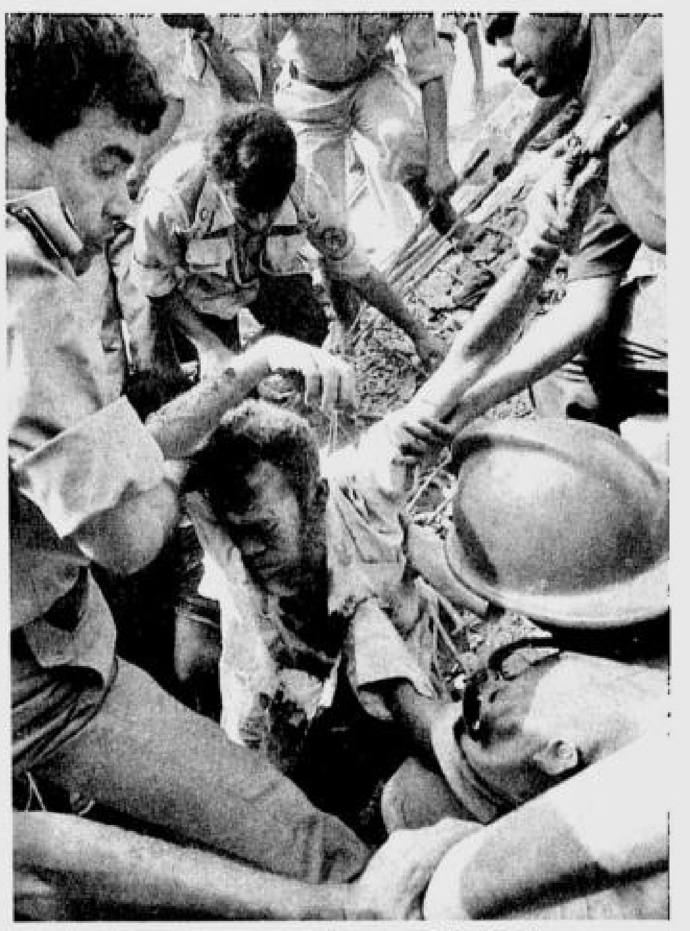
Anxious residents used mobile phones to try to contact relatives trapped beneath the rubble.

"Until a few minutes ago, my brother Jamal was calling me on my mobile for help. But now he has gone quiet," Ruma Begum said.

"I am still frantically trying to reach him on his mobile ... but there is no response. Only Allah knows what has happened," she told reporters.

Local TV showed the remains of the factory as a huge pile of concrete and bricks. Rescuers were picking through the rubble and calling out for survivors.

"Hey, how many are there with you," yelled one rescuer through a gap in the rubble. "Seven including myself," a feeble voice replied. *Reuters*



RESCUERS pulling out a survivor out of the debris. AFP

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Mail applications to: Richard Gelb, ISM Director of Communications, University Parkway, Fort Bonifacio, 1634 Taguig City. A select list of applicants will be invited to take an entrance examination and be interviewed at International School Manila on a later date.

Eligibility: Filipino citizens who have completed second year of high school and who will be between the ages of fifteen and sixteen years by September 30, 2005. Applicants must have a solid record of academic achievement, i.e., no grade lower than 85% or its equivalent, and be in the top 5% of his or her class.

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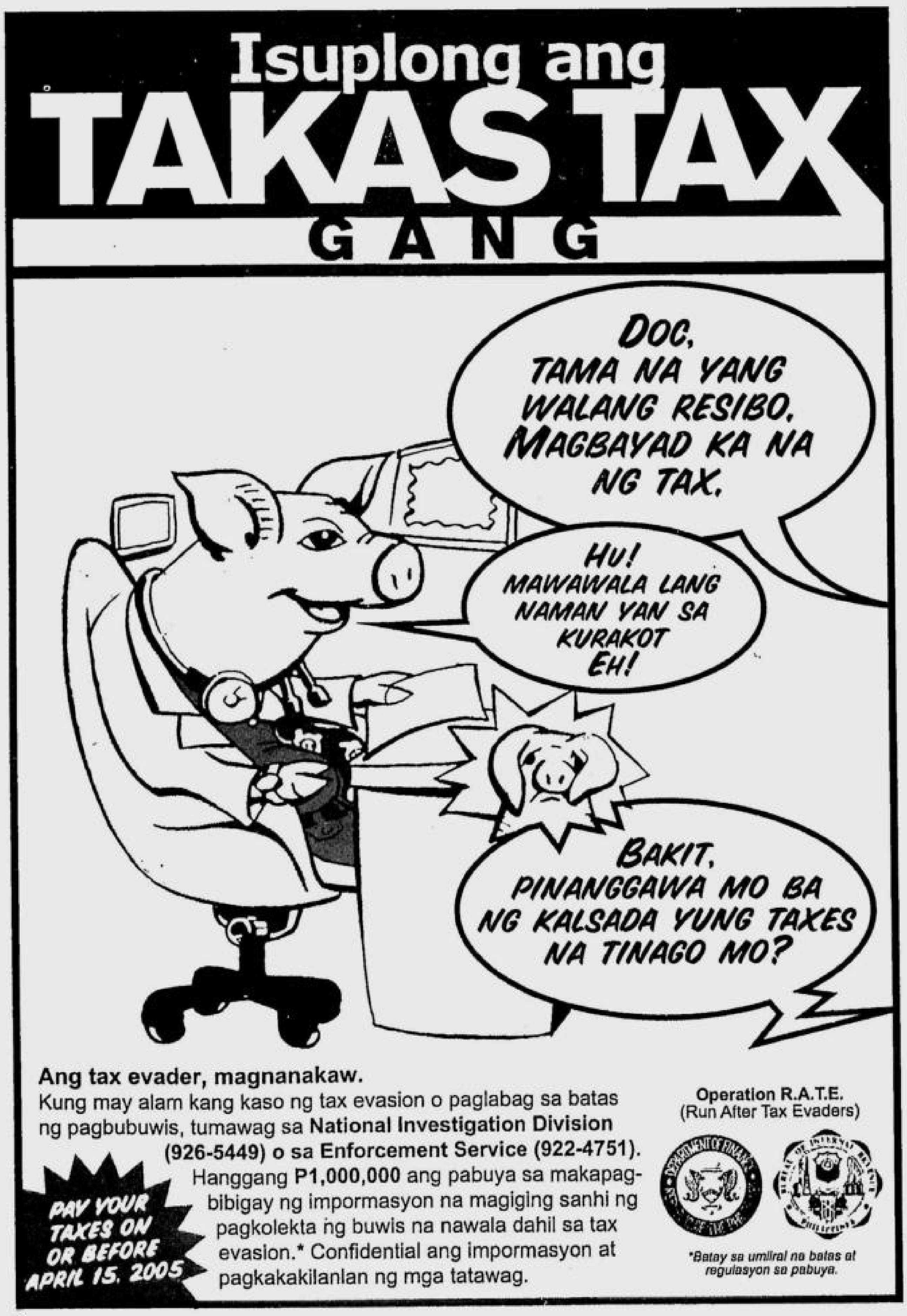

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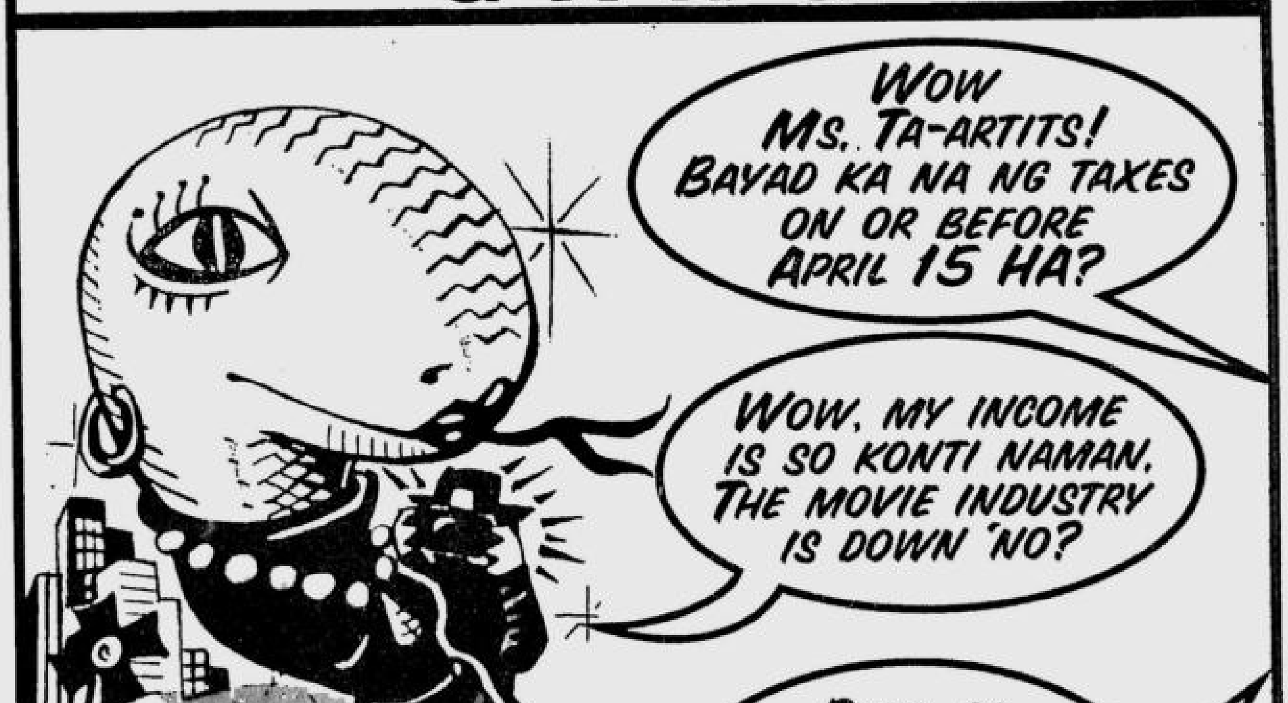
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3 suicide car bomb attacks hit US military position in Iraq

RAMADI, Iraq—Three suicide car bombs hit a US military position in a restive area of western Iraq near the Syrian border on Monday, wounding at least two soldiers.

"What we have right now is three confirmed suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices," 1st Lt. Kate VandenBossche, a spokesperson for the US marines, told AFP.

She said two soldiers were injured in the early morning attack on the Camp Gannon forward operation base, adding: "We are still trying to determine if the casualties were coalition or Iraqi security forces."

Qaim, where insurgents are suspected of regularly crossing into Iraq from Syria, is the site of frequent clashes between rebels and US forces. It lies about 300 kilometers west of Baghdad in Al-Anbar province.

"The blast was incredible," said Iraqi police Lt. Yasir al-Hadithi, adding that US helicopters were hovering over the scene of the attack which was followed by the sound of heavy gunfire.

Despite a massive US-led assault on the former rebel bastion of Fallujah in November, the Iraqi government has been unable to reassert control over Anbar, a stronghold of Islamic fighters and Saddam Hussein loyalists.

In early March, the bodies of at least 30 people, most of them believed to be Iraqi soldiers, were found in Qaim. They had been shot.

Underscoring the relentless violence that plagues Iraq two years since the fall of Saddam's regime, the family of Malik Muhammad Javed, a Pakistani Embassy official abducted in Baghdad two days ago, were in tears over his fate.

He went missing Saturday after going to a mosque for evening prayers.

"They are all crying and consoling each other," said Javed's elder son, Bilal Malik, at the family's home in Islamabad.

"We are extremely worried over the kidnapping," he told AFP. "We appeal to the kidnappers to release our father.

"I am in touch with my eldest sister who lives in Baghdad with my father, but we have no other details," Malik added.

Pakistan's information minister Sheikh Rashid said his government has intensified its efforts to release Javed, who did not hold diplomatic status. *AFP*

AN IRAQI girl gets a close look at an Iraqi National Guard patrolling Haifa Street in Baghdad, Iraq, April 7. Haifa street is known locally as "death street," for the many ambushes that have taken place in the area. AP

Thaksin launches new drug war

BANGKOK — Thailand's prime minister on Monday launched a new round in his war on drugs, despite allegations that police conducted summary executions during the previous campaign.

Human rights activists immediately expressed concern over the new efforts to battle the illegal drug trade. About 2,300 people were killed in the first campaign, which ran from February to April 2003, and activists say many of the killings were extrajudicial executions by security forces.

The government, however, insisted that police only shot a handful of people, mostly in self-defense, while the rest were killed by drug gangs trying to silence informers or eliminate rivals.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said while his government had been largely successful in cracking down on big traffickers, small dealers were still everywhere, and the stimulant methamphetamine continued to be easily available at entertainment venues.

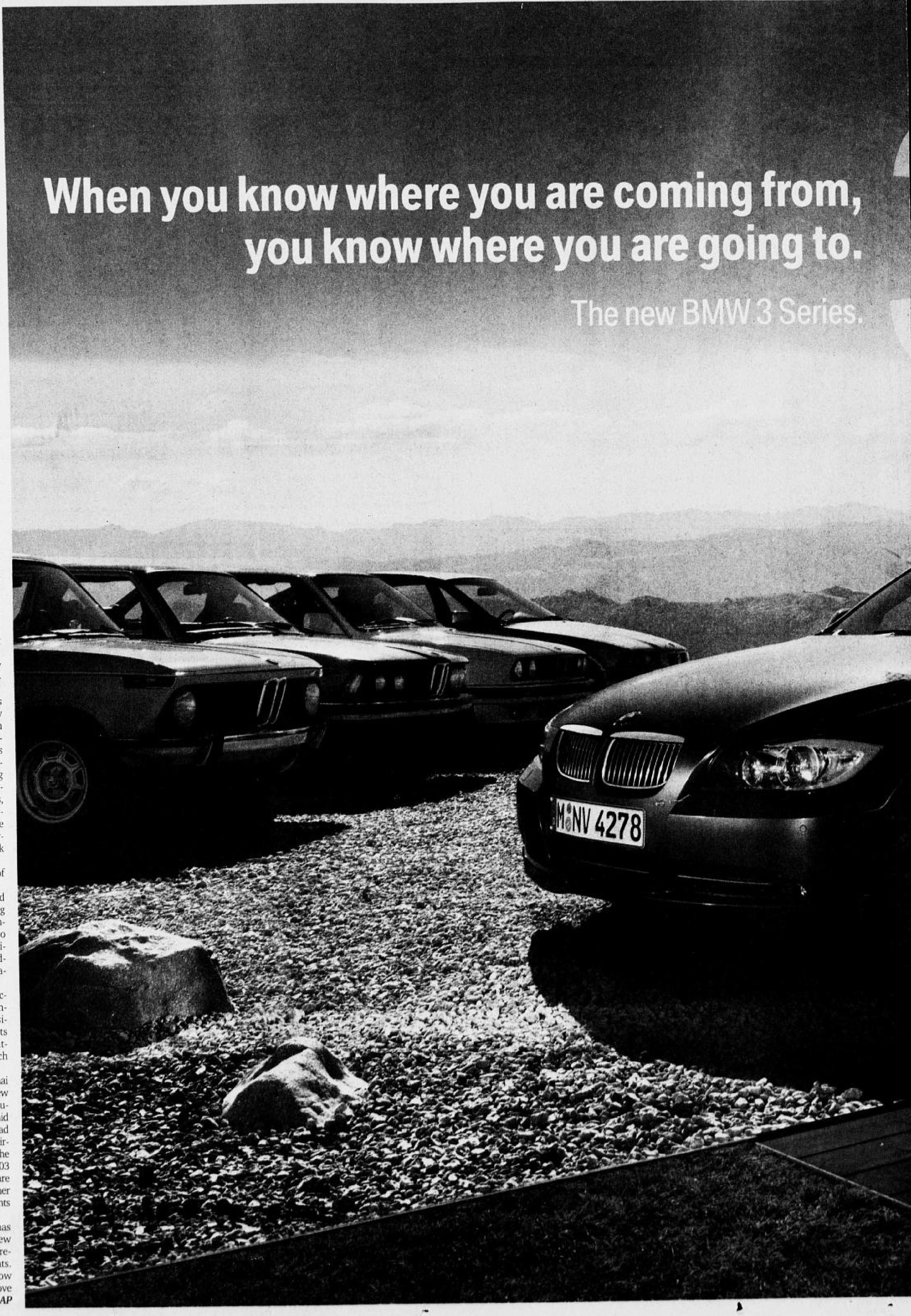
"Drug trafficking has become increasingly widespread," Thaksin said in a speech to policemen, civic officials and community leaders in Bangkok. "Drug dealers have been released from prisons, while fugitives on police wanted lists have not been seriously pursued and come back again."

The use of methamphetamines—mostly smuggled from neighboring Burma (Myanmar)—has become so widespread in Thailand that it's considered a threat to national security.

Meanwhile, activists expressed concern over the possibility of human rights violations in the latest campaign, which lasts until June.

Sunai Phasuk, a Thai consultant to the New York-based group Human Rights Watch, said the government had still not clarified the circumstances of the killings during the 2003 campaign, and "we are worried it will further violate human rights and the rule of law."

"Thaksin has pledged that his new government will respect human rights. Hence, he has to show his sincerity and prove it," he said. *AP*



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Iraq fiasco haunts Blair as he hits campaign trail

LONDON—Reg Keys is on an emotional one-man mission to stop Tony Blair winning the British election.

The 52-year-old retired medic's son Tom was killed by a mob in Iraq in 2003, so Keys has decided to stand against Blair as an independent candidate to make sure the prime minister does not forget it.

"I want to hold Tony Blair to account for his deceit over the war in Iraq," Keys said as he began campaigning.

"My son Tom believed what he was told, but Blair lied to him, and to all those other soldiers who came home in coffins after fighting in a war that was illegal and immoral."

Keys has a virtually impossible task to topple Blair—at the 2001 election, the Labour Party leader won a 17,713 majority in his northeast English constituency of Sedgefield.

But his mere presence is an awkward reminder to Blair of the inescapable Iraq factor haunting him ahead of the May 5 poll.

The UK leader's decision to support the US-led invasion of Iraq has become the defining theme of his eight-year rule.

Domestic opposition was already high when Britain went to war.

But the lack of postwar peace for Iraq plus, more importantly, accusations London hyped intelligence about Saddam Hussein's arms programs to justify the war, intensified criticism and has sent Blair's trust ratings tumbling.

"It is the sense of betrayal that is the root of the anger ... Until the government comes to grips with that, they will never stem the molten lava of anger that flows from the volcano of Iraq," said Independent newspaper columnist Adrian Hamilton.

Iraq has been the backdrop of all the iconic lows for Blair this term—a humiliating slow handclap by a female audience at a TV appearance; ministerial resignations and the suicide of a UK weapons inspector embroiled in the intelligence row.

Now on the campaign trail, Blair still cannot escape Iraq.

From Keys on his doorstep in Sedgefield, to endless questions at public appearances, Iraq rears its head at every turn despite Blair's best efforts to swing attention to domestic issues like the economy and public services. Tellingly, few Labour legislators are using Blair's image on their propaganda.

"Without Iraq, Labour would be higher in polls and on for an easy win," said pollster Peter Kellner. "Because of it, the race is tighter and they may have a greatly reduced majority."

Polls show a tighter-than-expected battle, with Labour just a few percentage points ahead in most. But the opposition Conservatives would still need a large swing to wrest power from Blair as the electoral map greatly favors Labour's chances.

So if people are so upset over Iraq, why won't Blair lose?

Iraq's fall down the British media headlines, combined with the opposition parties' failure to capitalize properly, have been a godsend to Blair at a crucial time.

"(Conservative leader) Michael Howard has spectacularly failed to land punches on the whole controversy over war in Iraq," said Blair biographer Anthony Seldon.

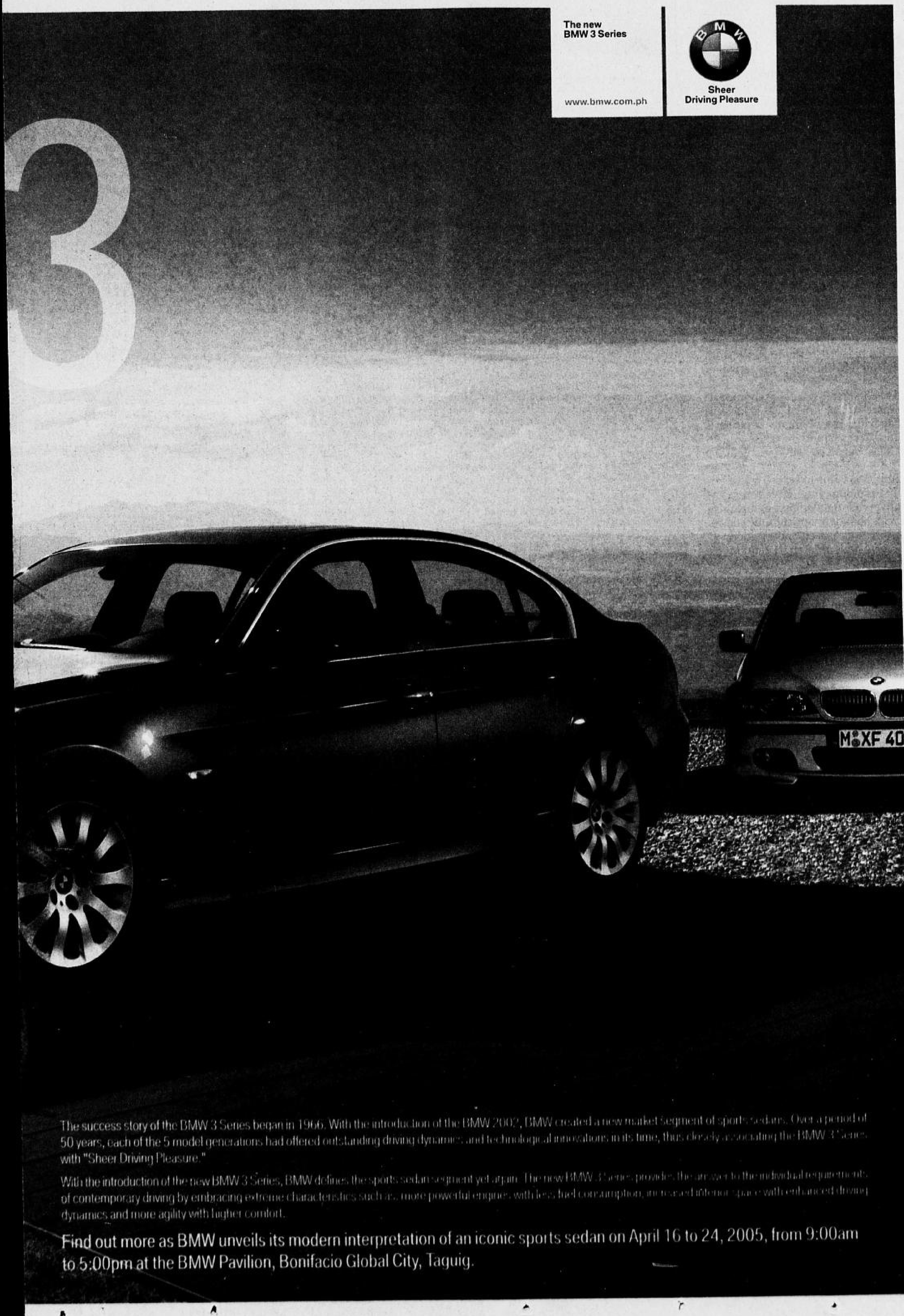
Hamstrung by having backed the war in the first place, the Conservatives nevertheless attacked Blair over the intelligence controversy, but were hit back with accusations of opportunism.

Blair loyalists insist the Iraq factor is being exaggerated by the "Westminster Village" of London-based journalists and politicians. They point to a recent poll showing only one in 10 voters considered it the most important factor.

And while acknowledging the damage it has done him, aides say it at least shows Blair's courage as a leader.

Blair himself does not try to ignore the issue.

"With Iraq I had to decide, would the world be better without Saddam or with him? In the end, I think it's better he is out but I have never disrespected someone with a different point of view," he told a recent interviewer. Reuters



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With the introduction of the new BMW 3 Series, BMW defines the sports sedan segment yet again. The new BMW 3 Series provides the answer to the individual requirements of contemporary driving by embracing extreme characteristics such as: more powerful engines with less fuel consumption, increased interior space with enhanced driving dynamics and more agility with higher comfort.

Find out more as BMW unveils its modern interpretation of an iconic sports sedan on April 16 to 24, 2005, from 9:00am to 5:00pm at the BMW Pavilion, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Murdered journalist given award

BANJUL—The PEN American Center has announced that Gambian investigative journalist Deida Hydara, murdered in a December 2004 drive-by shooting, will next week receive an international free speech award for persecuted writers.

Hydara will be honored with the 2005 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom To Write Award "for challenging increasingly restrictive press laws in Gambia."

Hydara died instantly after being shot three times on Dec. 16 after leaving his office at the newspaper The Point, of which he was co-editor, following a 13th anniversary party for the broadsheet.

His killers have not been found, but his murder is widely seen as political.

The dean of the Gambian press corps and AFP's correspondent in the country, the 58-year-old Hydara was an outspoken advocate of press freedom in the small west African country.

He wrote a number of scathing editorials and open letters to the government to protest new laws passed by parliament in December that stiffened penalties for journalists accused of libel.

"Deida Hydara was one of a small group of incredibly brave newspaper publishers who have refused to go quietly into the noose of increasingly draconian press laws in Gambia. He paid with his life. Now the cause of press freedom his country includes bringing his killers to justice," the PEN American Center said.

Hydara's son, Ismaila Hydara, on April 20 will receive the prize at a ceremony in the United States on his father's behalf, Pap Saine, the co-founder of The Point said.

Saine said the honor was a form of "revenge on the assassins" and "a reward for what he fought for his whole life, a free and independent press."

In addition to Hydara, the PEN American Center also honored a prominent Saudi writer and intellectual, Ali Al-Domaini, imprisoned in his country since March 2004 for having criticized the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia, the association said.

Since 1987, a total of 37 people have been honored with the prize. *AFP*

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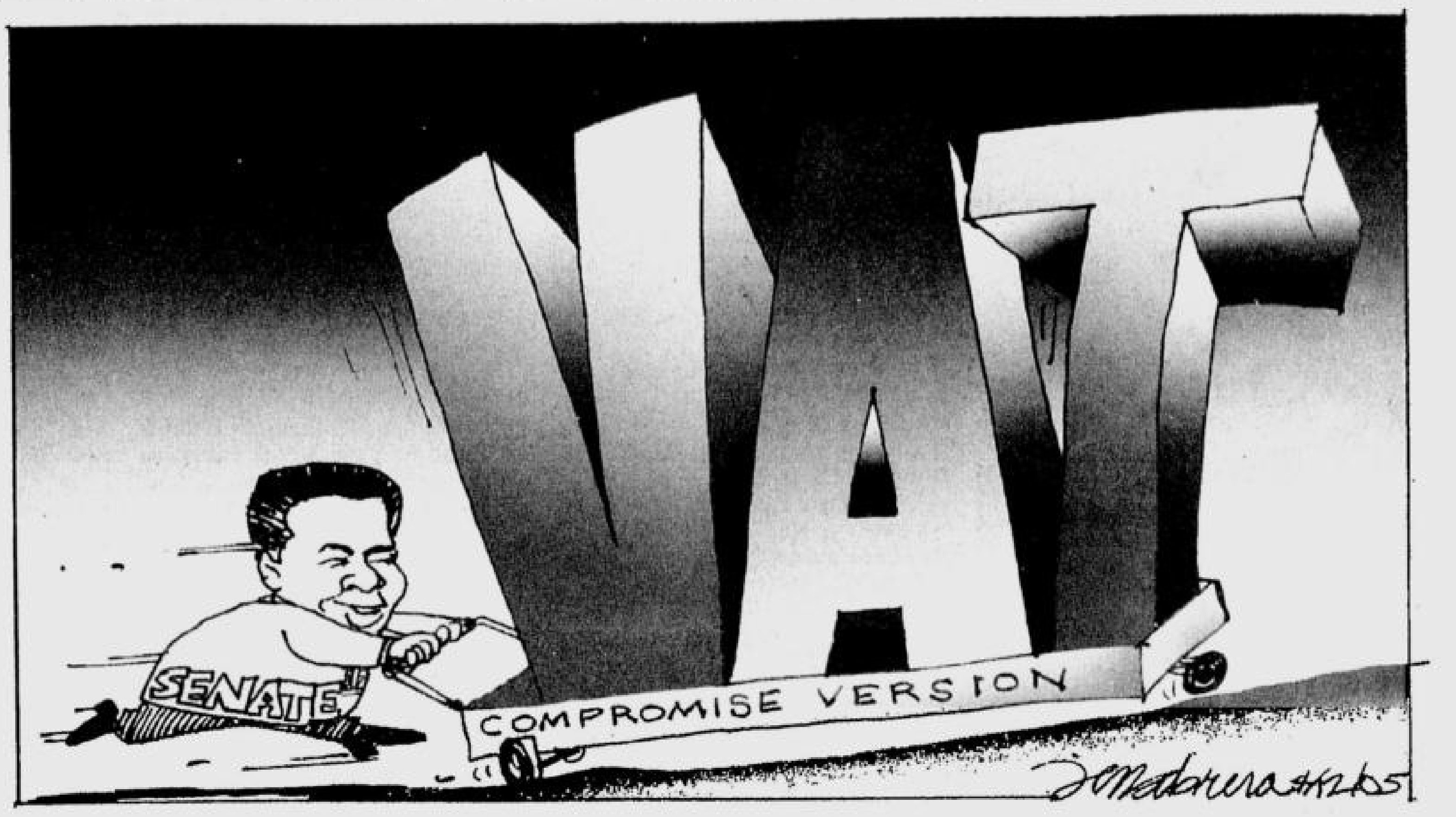

Energy options

EDITORIAL

LAST week, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas urged further caution against oil-related inflationary pressures as the International Monetary Fund warned that high and volatile oil prices would prevail in the coming years. IMF experts said the global oil market would remain tight in the coming years, posing a risk to the world economy.

All countries are now experiencing a new oil price shock reminiscent of the one that the world felt in 1973-74 when the price of oil quadrupled to nearly $12 a barrel. Since then the price of oil has consistently risen, and a return to old price levels is not likely. David Robinson, deputy director of the IMF's research department, said he believed the oil price shock was going to be "a permanent shock."

With the long-term oil prices projected to range between $39 and $56 a barrel, or to go as high as $100 a barrel (following Goldman Sachs' forecast), what is a poor developing country like the Philippines, heavily dependent on imported oil, to do?

The immediate measures are to try to reduce the consumption of fuel oils. One measure is the four-day work week in government offices and another is the revival of daylight savings time.

Right now it is hard to drastically limit consumption of fuel oils by the transport sector, unless car pools are adopted nationwide and the use of motor vehicles is severely restricted. Electric cars could help bring down consumption of fossil fuels, but so far they are still in the experimental stage.

Now should be an auspicious time to launch a concerted effort to develop and promote alternative sources of energy. A study has shown that the Philippines, being an archipelagic country with abundant agricultural and renewable resources, has bright prospects and great opportunities for the development and commercialization of alternative sources of energy.

Lying just above the equator, the Philippines has a vast potential for solar energy applications. The country's average daily insolation—exposure to the sun's rays—is about five kilowatt hours per square meter per day. Its average solar radiation based on sunshine duration is 161.7 watts per square meter, with a range of 128-203 W/m2.

Photovoltaic applications range from telecommunications, battery charging stations, PV-powered video cinemas, refrigerators, incubators and street lights. About 5 million rural households have up to this time no access to electrical power. Photovoltaic technology is a promising option for the electrification of remote rural areas.

The Philippines has a good potential for wind energy. The national average mean wind power density is about 31 watts per square meter. Regions that have the highest potential for wind energy applications are the Ilocos region, Cordillera Administrative Region, Central Luzon, Bicol, and Western Visayas.

More than 10,000 square kilometers of windy land areas have been estimated to exist with good to excellent wind resource potential. At about 7MW per km2, the windy lands could support more than 70,000MW of potential installed capacity. Forty-seven provinces have at least 500MW of wind potential, and 25 have at least 1,000MW of wind potential. The harnessing of potential wind power could help promote industrial and commercial development in the countryside with minimum expenditure on expensive fuel oils.

Another potentially rich source of energy is biomass supply. Its potential in year 2000 was estimated at 253.8 million barrels of fuel oil equivalent. This was expected to grow to 301.5 MMBFOE in 2008. Contributing to the biomass potential are fuelwood, bagasse, coconut residues, rice hull, animal waste and municipal solid waste.

Still another alternative source of energy is micro-hydro systems with a capacity of less than 100 kilowatts. At present there are 68 units of these systems installed, generating a total capacity of 233 KW.

The Philippines is now the world's second largest user of geothermal energy for power generation, with 1,931 megawatts of installed capacity. In 2003, geothermal plants generated about 9,420 gigawatt-hours of electricity, displacing about 16.24 MMBFOE and resulting in $454.7 in foreign exchange savings. The Philippines' total potential reserves in geothermal energy is 4,790MW. To repeat, only 1,931MW of these have been tapped. There is certainly a lot of room for expanding the country's use of this resource.

Indeed, the Philippines has vast resources of alternative energy. All that is needed is to develop these resources further. Their use will mean huge savings in dollars that would otherwise be used for the importation of fossil fuels. And for sure, their use will also mean a cleaner, less polluted environment.

Clogged e-mail boxes

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

JOHN Paul's passing swamped our e-mails. Thus, we postponed reporting how readers, here and abroad, reacted to our INQUIRER columns: "Toga Pageant" on the failure of schools to educate; and "Old-fashioned greed," underscored in yesterday's blatant wrecking of Ati homes in Boracay, as local officials—taking their cue from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's indifference—looked the other way." Here are excerpts:

From Australia's New South Wales, Manuel Santiago writes: Our leaders, particularly President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, should heed Paolo Freire's warning, in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," against leaders of "ambiguous behavior."

"The man or woman who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into communion with people, whom he or she continuous to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived," Freire wrote.

GMA is unable "to enter into communion" with the people. Look at the media-hype governance, lifestyles of her husband, "dynasty" mentality in family members: her sons as governor and congressmen... The lowly "pinoy," who saves, who is "*matipid*" is the real economist, not the one with Ph.Ds.

The Missionaries of Jesus' Father Wilfredo Dulay weighs in: Senator Jamby Madrigal should not stop speaking for the voiceless, like the Atis of Boracay whose homes were wrecked Sunday. She might sound crazy sometimes, but she's crazy for the right cause, the right reasons.

More Filipinos should do something about what the greedy rich, like "Dr." Lucio Tan, do, especially to the weakest who have neither voice nor arms to defend themselves.

From London, (Ms) Naria Walyena writes: "As a Sri Lankan researcher in England, with many Filipino friends, 'Old-fashioned greed' reminded me that our countries are very similar. But I pity your country. It's a democracy, with famous statesmen, and natural resources. Yet it is, by many Filipino journalists' accounts, spiraling into helplessness.

"So many Filipinos here in England tell me their sad stories. They want to go back, but with the bad news from home, they think again."

Filipino journalists will be writing about these same problems a century from now. Is there any hope within the system? Perhaps, it's time to let the radical insurgents prove their programs can solve problems of old-fashioned greed, dynasties and violence?

Anita Tolentino in Edmonton, Canada and Oscar Landicho in Sydney write on the need for tacking on more school years if those togas, at graduation rites, are to mean anything.

Canada' junior and senior high provide 12 years of basic education. Australia's Higher School Certificate tacks on two more to its core of ten years—and that excludes pre-school and kindergarten. The Philippines, in contrast, has 10.

Odin Matanguihan writes: A sister wrote her thesis on the migration of health care professionals. She analyzed education as investment, and concluded: medical education doesn't pay off with the exception of those who do migrate.

"Even with a relatively good job, I barely break even. Handling college entrance exams, as student assistant in a state university, I found the results worse than presented in your column. So, I gave free tutorials on math, engineering and computer subjects, helping algebra illiterates appreciate the beauty of calculus."

How much does it cost to "effectively" educate one school age child every year? How many public school children are there per taxpayer? And how much, on average, does each taxpayer give to the government per year?

We're not giving enough. Austerity is important so resources can be spent on education that would translate to real returns.

From her experience as a 22-year-old homeroom adviser to barrio grade 6 pupils "long ago," Libia L. Chavez writes. She taught reading in English, history and home economics—in a relatively well-equipped school, since the congressman came from that barrio.

"The 30 pupils were an eclectic mix: some from relatively well-off [families of] professionals and tradesmen, plus children of farmers and peasants. A third—and the poorer ones—were over-aged by about two to three years. Now and then, they dropped out to help plant or harvest.

"Of course, they lagged. Nonetheless, I tried to incorporate their field experiences in the lessons, so they'd not feel left out. They passed and were ready to graduate. Dress simply, I told them.

"On graduation day, four girls—nails painted red, dark lipstick, high-heeled sandals—walked in and apologized. In essence, they said:

"Sorry ma'am, we couldn't heed your advise. This is our last graduation. After today, we'll be working in the fields again, Unlike our other classmates, we'll not be going on to high school. We don't know when we can really dress up like this again ...something to that effect.

"That was the day I probably grew up. And your 'Toga pageant' column triggered that memory. The toga is a mark of accomplishment, no matter if it's not anything to brag about.

"That it was hiding the lack of learning is not the issue. It's about a brief shining moment in their lives, that can be looked back to, to assuage miseries yet to come.

"The girls were apologizing to me why, all throughout civilization, ceremonies are necessary. Dressing up for milestones are essential. It's s not about doing logarithms or reading Shakespeare.

"Whether children stay 10 or 12 or 14 years is not as important as the environment of learning. It takes a community to raise a child and a nation to educate him. But how can a nation bereft of dignity do that?"

No, it cannot. "Old-fashioned greed" will continue to trample the powerless, like those Atis in Boracay or kids who must put away togas for good.

* * *

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Smallness

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I, TOO, was astounded when I heard President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo claim in an interview with CNN that Pope John Paul II helped engineer Edsa II. "It was after my conversation with the Pope that I finally found—shall I describe it as courage or conviction—to make the break and join the bloodless revolution." She went on to say that she has been guided throughout her rule by the Pope's convictions. "The Pope had a very, very keen sense of understanding of what is happening in the Philippines and he was very encouraging towards my taking steps to make sure that I would do what I could do in order to promote morality in Philippine society."

I do not blame Didagen Dilangalen for bristling at the suggestion. He puts into words what many Filipinos must have thought at the interview: "At a time when we should be sending off a great and morally upright man to his eternal rest, Ms Arroyo's statement alleging that the Holy Father tacitly approved any move she might make to take over the government of our country in 2001 smacks of politicking of the cheapest kind."

Dilangalen might be forgiven his biases, which come from being the defender of the faith, also known as Erap. He cannot possibly be amused at the thought that the overthrow of his boss carried with it divine; or at least pontifical, sanction. There is something truly cheap and distasteful about putting words into a dead man's mouth to advance one's interest. The dead cannot rise from the grave to refute it. Or can't he? But I am getting ahead of my story. There and then, GMA herself refutes the notion that she drew inspiration from the Pope in striving to spread morality in this country. It is clear she has not imbibed it; it is not seen in her conduct. Indeed, forget morality, mind only manners. Dilangalen is right, the living might want to show some respect for the dead.

When I heard GMA say it, the first thing I did was wonder why a thunderbolt did not issue from the sky and strike the interview site. I will take the Pope's name in vain, too, and say that I heard from him in a dream that he interceded before an irate God not to do so—he was a most forgiving man. The second thing I did was to remember that GMA also said she would not run again. Some habits are just hard to break.

To begin with, even if what GMA says is true, that the Pope convinced her to join the struggle to overthrow Erap, why on earth, or in hell, would she need something like that? Why on earth, or in hell, would she need the Pope to give her the courage or conviction to do what needed to be done? Corazon Aquino never needed the Pope to discover the strength to fight Marcos. She needed only to look into her own heart. The NGOs and schools and media and politicians, opposition and administration, never needed the Pope to glimpse the compelling need to rid the country of a petty tyrant, or pest. They needed only to look around them and hear the agonized cry of a people.

What a benighted thing to do, attribute one's joining Edsa to the Pope's or anybody else's moral suasion. Lest she forget, the concept is called People Power, not Pope Power. Morality is nothing but the capacity to see right or wrong in our midst. Courage comes from within, not from without.

But all this presupposes she is telling the truth, and like I said, she promised not to run again. That she followed the Pope's wishes with respect to Edsa II, we only have her word for. That she has **not** followed the Pope's wishes with respect to everything else, that is engraved in stone. You go down the list, and she has pretty much gone against everything the Pope has stood for. The Pope stood against the American invasion of Iraq, calling it unjust and immoral. GMA has gone for it whole hog. The Pope stood for peace and a culture of life, GMA has subscribed to war and culture of death. The Pope spoke for accommodation and dialogue. GMA takes those who are not for her as being against her. The Pope lived simply and austerely. GMA's husband likes to rent $20,000-per-night hotel rooms.

I do not know how it can be possible to mistake the Pope's voice with that of George W. Bush. Even while ravaged with disease, the Pope spoke with angelic resonance, which has been known to accompany the truth. Even at his healthiest, at least physically, Bush has spoken with pipsqueak malevolence, which has been known to accompany deceit. GMA says the Pope approved of her efforts to spread morality in this country. The record shows the Pope has never approved of lying, cheating and stealing.

But what truly assails about GMA's self-serving statements about what the Pope told her is that it so directly and atrociously contravenes the spirit of things. Few leaders can hope to rival the Pope in stature, but most of them can at least try to emulate him. The Pope was above all about humility, about forswearing greed and covetousness, about a largeness of spirit. Though he was a man of tremendous influence, he, like Mother Teresa, thought first about serving others and last himself. Though he could always sit at the front, he always preferred to sit at the back—and for that reason was asked by the world to move to the head of the table. Truly, the humble shall be exalted. And just as truly, the exalted, or trying-hard-to-be, will be humbled.

It is the Pope's largeness of spirit that made him larger than life and makes him tower over death. Everyone he met left with the feeling they had caught a glimpse of the divine. It is GMA's smallness of spirit that makes her smaller than life and dwarfs her stature all the more. Everyone she has met has left only with the feeling they have caught a glimpse of the petty.

Small is as small does.

Reforms in papal voting

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THERE'S a story told by Jaime Cardinal Sin about how Karol Cardinal Wojtyla was elected in 1978. Sin, whose cell was next door to Wojtyla's then, recalls that after seven ballots in the 1978 Conclave, no candidate had garnered the required 2/3 vote. He and a few cardinals began to worry about how to break the impasse. Whereupon they spotted 57-year-old Cardinal Wojtyla praying in one corner. They thought they beheld some kind of aura over him. They sounded him out but he vehemently refused; when they insisted, he began to cry. The rest is history.

* * *

Papal elections, long before bookies thought of making money out of them, have always been replete with stories of nobles and knaves, greatness and depravity, judging by Greg Tobin's book, "Selecting the Pope." In the first 500 years of Church history, the election of popes was marked by all kinds of twists and turns that would have driven bookies into despair and film-makers into ecstasy. The elections were marked by machinations of "anti-popes," abdications of popes, contesting of results, ouster of elected ones due to "apostasy," buying of the papacy (called "simony"), intervention by an emperor, and many other events that the Comelec today would classify as "highly irregular."

* * *

In those times, voting for a pope was open not just to cardinals but also to priests and the laity. And the candidates were not drawn exclusively from the ranks of the cardinals. The last non-cardinal to be elected was Urban VI in 1378. The last time non-cardinals participated in a papal election was in 1417. The first significant reforms in papal elections began in the second half of the first millennium. In 499, a synod of bishops banned all discussions of papal succession during a pope's lifetime, but allowed him to nominate his successor; it also prohibited the participation of the laity and the role of the clergy was elevated. The Rome synod of 607 forbade simony under pain of excommunication; by 769, under Pope Stephen III, only deacons and cardinal priests were eligible to vote for a pope.

* * *

But in November 824, this privilege was given back to the laity by the Roman Constitution. In April 1059, Nicolas II promulgated a kind of compromise: cardinal bishops would first consult and vote, then the lower clergy and the people would acclaim the election of the pontiff. The requisite two-thirds majority vote in a papal election was introduced in Alexander III's decree at the Third Lateran Council. Then, in July 1274, Gregory X, who assumed the papacy after a vacancy of nearly three years, pushed at the Second Council of Lyon the concept of the "conclave" as it has been known ever since, mandating strict rules and frugal meals. Under this new ruling Innocent V was elected as the first Dominican pope in January 1276. But in 1294 Celestine V restored the legislation of Gregory X, allowing three forms of election: acclamation, compromise and scrutiny.

Boniface VIII instituted the practice of seclusion of electors at a conclave, and in October 1303, the first papal conclave at the Vatican elected Benedict XI. Still more changes: Clement V limited the cardinals' powers during vacancy and extended electoral rights to cardinals previously suspended or excommunicated; Clement VI did away with frugality and allowed more creature comforts during a conclave.

* * *

After the Great Western Schism in 1417 at the Council of Constance, a conclave was held with 23 cardinals and 25 bishops; it was the last time that non-cardinals were to participate in a papal election. In July 1517, Leo X's "Grand Consistory" elevated a record number of 31 cardinals, and in December 1558, a decree by Paul IV prescribed severe penalties for anyone doing secret canvassing prior to the death of the pope. By November 1561, Pius IV had firmly cemented the decree that in the event a pope dies, the cardinals and not the ecumenical council are to choose his successor. Another decree by Pius IV also provided that conclave funds be restricted, that cells for cardinals in conclave are to be chosen by lot, and the participants are assured of secrecy and safety.

* * *

By 1605, Leo XI appointed the commission of cardinals to reform the electoral process of the conclave and in 1622, Gregory XV codified the ceremonies to be observed in the conclave. In September 1695, Innocent XII prohibited any and all promises or "capitulations" that would bind a future pope before his election—we now call this "no electioneering." In December 1869, Pius IX issued a decree reiterating once and for all the exclusive right of the cardinals, not the Vatican council, to elect his successor. Since then, there have been a succession of several popes, but only the cardinals elected popes.

In 1878 Leo XIII, who came to be known as Leo The Great, was elected on the third ballot; followed by Pius X in 1903 on the seventh ballot; Benedict XV in 1914 on the 10th ballot; Pius XI in 1922 on the 14th ballot; Pius XII in 1939, the eve of World War II, on the third ballot; John XXIII in 1958 on the 12th ballot; and Paul VI on the fifth ballot in 1963. After the three-month reign of John Paul I came John Paul II's 26-year reign. JPII was elected on the eighth ballot.

Interestingly, in February 1996, JPII set out rules for the next conclave where the cardinals will select his successor. One of the most significant changes JPII made was: after a long deadlock of thirty ballotings, the new pope may be elected by a simple majority.

Moving against 'kiddie porn'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHILE poverty is a factor that makes a child vulnerable to pedophiles and child pornographers, children of well-off families can fall prey to these predators as well, writes Arnie Trinidad, main author of "Child Pornography in the Philippines," a new publication of the Psychosocial Trauma and Human Rights Program of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies and Unicef Manila.

"(Well-off) children may often have access to computers and the Internet which would expose them to all sorts of pornographic materials, including child pornography," says Trinidad. But even without the "aid" of a computer, a child could be exposed to inappropriate images and messages as well, what with pornographic materials sold openly in the streets. "Exposure to these may have the potential to desensitize children and make them believe that pornography is normal, that there is nothing wrong with children portrayed as sexual beings."

One of the more surprising bits of information in the book is that "peer influence is the most influential factor in the entry of children into the (sex) industry."

As with prostitution, notes Trinidad, so is it with child pornography. Interviews with young women working in so-called "cybersex" establishments showed that they had been recruited largely through the recommendation or referral of other girls. "Lisa," for instance, confided that "she considered working at a cybersex joint because other girls said that it was easier and much safer to work in such places because she no longer had to have sex with customers."

When your co-workers or even *barkada* are engaged in work that is not only profitable but also relatively "safe," it becomes easier to convince yourself that it is "harmless."

The book tells the stories of children willing to perform sexual acts in front of web cameras "in exchange for mobile phone credits," and other such paltry rewards. But as Trinidad notes, "they may, without their knowledge, encounter pedophiles in search of very young children to exploit. They may also be unaware that it is possible to capture their video or still images for whatever purpose it may serve the pedophiles."

* * *

ONE of the main obstacles to generating more public indignation against child pornography and getting authorities to move more decisively against profiteers is that "it is a little understood issue."

"Children are not often seen as objects of sexual affection by most Filipinos," notes the author. "There is a tendency to treat naked pictures of children, especially of pre-pubescent children, as innocuous because they are not perceived as sexual beings."

Trinidad also traces a tendency among Filipinos to see child pornography as "no more than secondary" to other forms of sexual abuse, including child sexual molestation, "a mind-set (that) trivializes the real extent of the problem and deprives it of the attention it truly deserves."

Corollary to this is the covert nature of child pornography, for "unless the victims report their experience or identify themselves, their exploitation will remain hidden. Unlike (in) prostitution or rape, pornography's victims do not speak out precisely because there is a seeming harmlessness in the act of taking their photographs or video."

Trinidad adds that the children themselves may not consider themselves as having engaged in something "bad," "criminal," or "immoral." Oftentimes, those exploiting the children "prime" them by making them watch pornographic films or videos.

Another problem with raising public awareness of the issue is the "general perception" that only foreign pedophiles are capable of exploiting children, or that only foreigners could be pedophiles. But, says Trinidad, "Filipinos are equally capable of harming children in pornography," whether as producers of pornography, accomplices, pimps or fronts of foreign operators.

The author also stresses that while child pornography "should be considered as a discrete form of child sexual abuse," it is also "inextricably linked with other forms of sexual exploitation." As he notes: "A child victimized in pornography has most likely experienced sexual abuse under the hands of those who (produce) pornography" or other adults.

* * *

ONE other factor that makes it difficult for authorities to crack down on child pornographers—quite apart from the lack of legal impediments—is the refusal of private entities involved in the "industry" to cooperate.

The book mentions credit card companies and Internet service providers (ISPs) as being particularly remiss.

Credit card companies and ISPs often cite "customer privacy protection policies" to justify their refusal to divulge information against customers "who may be hosting child pornographic websites or who may be subscribing to child pornographic images from porn websites."

The Philippine Internet Service Organization (Piso), an association of ISPs, has already adopted an ethical code, says Trinidad, but nobody knows just how far and how stringently such a code is enforced or obeyed.

Finally, as if the growing problem of child pornography in the country was not serious enough, everyone concerned concedes that local laws and regulations alone are not enough. "Child pornography cannot be solved on a local basis alone, especially because producers and distributors of child pornography…(are) also organized international networks of pornographers."

Still, this shouldn't stop governments from enacting and enforcing the necessary laws and cooperating with each other. As Trinidad declares: "The fact that children are involved requires immediate and unconditional action."

Roadmap to disaster

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

ROADMAP I is an advocacy paper on economics and other issues prepared by the American Chamber of Commerce. It reflects the views of the members of this business group.

Knowing like everyone else knows that we're all in a deep fix—even as our elected leaders keep taking off to foreign shores just to watch price fights in the guise of attending conferences—I hope that AmCham's suggestions would not merit another presidential shrug.

Roadmap II is an update of Roadmap I. Notably, both are based on annual surveys of American multinationals in the Southeast Asian nations. Roadmap I covers 17 sectors. Understandably, businessmen would like to see the "business climate" improve. You may not agree with the recommendations in these "roadmaps," but you have to agree with the observations. In fact, many of us have been saying the same things for some time.

Since 1965, our per capita income growth has been the lowest in Southeast Asia. This wouldn't be so bad if the cost of living were low, but our electricity rate is the second highest in the region. Sure, Japan's electricity is more expensive, but look at that country's income level. A friend noted that in the past two months, her grocery bill has doubled even if she's buying the same old stuff.

Last year, 1.4 million Filipinos joined the ranks of the 5 million unemployed. In case you still think this is gross exaggeration, the fact is our poverty rate at 30 percent is the highest in Southeast Asia; so is our unemployment rate. We, therefore, expect to see many of our new graduates leaving for jobs abroad; others will join the outsourcing and electronic manufacturing industries, which are the hottest foreign direct investment (FDI) targets. But right now, our FDI has fallen below $1 billion, while those of Malaysia and Thailand are in the level of $3 to $4 billion annually. I won't tell you about China because you'll just get cranky.

What the investors are asking is for the country to open up its economy more to FDI, and minimize protection for local special interests. This would maximize job creation. But think of local businessmen who invest in our politicians' elections or whose children are in politics to protect their business interests. Why should they agree?

We need $3 billion each year to improve our infrastructure (airports, bridges, ferries, railroads, roads, seaports and water systems). Air, land and marine transport facilities are poor, not to mention the water supply. (Have you seen your bill lately?) Unfortunately, the government doesn't have the money to do the job, and only the private sector can finance, build and operate most of the public utilities. Of course, we can always get them to build the facilities, and then take over them, but that method is sort of frowned upon and, most likely, won't be repeated.

The good news is that the Chinese and Korean governments are helping to improve our railway system in Central Luzon, although no one has yet explained why the government left it to completely deteriorate in the first place, even allowing squatters to practically take over the tracks. The neglect seems utterly stupid and senseless—letting an essential railway system fall into a state of total disrepair. Could it have been due to cronies investing in car manufacturing, although they never really did much but import car components and parts and put them together? As it is, we have "an unbroken record of decline…one of the worst performing railroads in the world" since the government took over its operation 40 years ago. And you know what? I don't think, anybody is embarrassed by this.

The bad news is that the businessmen are expecting power blackouts in Luzon (we have them already in Mindanao and the Visayas) by 2007-08, like the ones we went through in the early 1990s. Whatever the reasons—and they have to do with reforms that were not implemented—these will affect the economy severely. When those blackouts are upon us, we can concede "victory" over Bangladesh as the "lowest man" on the economic totem pole.

You are, of course, aware that a fiscal crisis could strike in two years even if the President herself has said the crisis is over and it was a non-issue in the last elections. There must be a way to shrink the budget deficit and minimize corruption. But why do I get the feeling that it's the public who's going to bear the brunt of scarcity and sacrifice while our lawmakers, who are multiplying like rabbits (there's a proposal to divide Cebu into four districts), continue to enjoy their "pork" and appear to have absolutely no clue about leading by example. (This goes for anyone perceived as belonging to the ruling class. You do not, I repeat, do not, book into hotel suites that cost $20,000 a night, even for free, while people back home live under bridges. It leaves a bad taste in the mouth).

Austerity isn't in the vocabulary of our leaders even if their constituents have been living the reality for a long time. Congressmen get P40 million each from the pork barrel and the senators, an even bigger amount. Can you imagine their agreeing to local officials' taking charge of development projects?

I think we're pretty much aware of what should be done to achieve a democratic system and an economy that work. The most basic is the political will for reforms, but there are tremendous forces at work in the bureaucracy, business, judiciary, and labor, military, political and even religious sectors opposing these to the extreme. The question is, can we still afford to bumble through another severe financial crisis like the one in 1983 and survive?

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

Arguing as a way of life

YOUNG BLOOD

Anjo Lorenzana

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THERE is a perception that Indians argue a lot. Anybody who has attended a meeting, discussion or conference with Indian participants can attest to this. If you had lived or visited India, the routine of arguing with rickshaw drivers on the right fare would be one fine example. Is there any explanation to the "argumentative Indian"?

A couple of weeks ago, 1998 Nobel Laureate for Economics Amartya Sen visited New Delhi, giving talks and interviews on many issues from culture to social policy. One public lecture was held at the India Habitat Center, where he briefly touched on the topic, "The Argumentative Indian" (which also happens to be the title of his forthcoming book). Sen admitted that talking and arguing is a way of life in Indian society and proceeded to show proof of this:

Speaking on the issue of Kashmir at the UN Security Council meeting in 1957, Krishna Menon holds the record of the longest speech ever delivered in the United Nations (approximately nine hours non-stop).

The "Bhagavad Gita," part of the long epic "Mahabhrata" (seven times as long as the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" combined) and the most read document of philosophical Hinduism, is, according to Sen, "essentially one long argument."

Interrogating and making counter arguments could also be found in the "Vedas." Composed of religious hymns and invocations, the "Vedas," at the same time, pose difficult questions on the origin of the universe, like "Is there a God who knows what really happened?"

Sen also noted that meetings, aimed at settling differences between competing viewpoints, were already commonplace in India in the so-called Buddhist councils after the death of Buddha 2,500 years ago. Indeed, India has a tradition of challenging beliefs, ideas and opinions, or of settling differences through meaningful arguments.

What is significant about arguing as a way of life? The Nobel Laureate pointed out two roles that arguing plays in a society—namely affirmation and critique. Sen said that "affirmation'" is associated with voice, and in particular with enunciation of claims and principles; while "critique" goes beyond affirmation and insists on scrutinizing what is voiced. Sen said democracy needs both.

Jurgen Habermas, a contemporary social thinker, has the same idea. (Sen also mentioned him in his speech.) Habermas calls for venues where people can gather, debate and formulate sound opinions that should guide the process of governance in a democratic state.

When Sen talked about India's argumentative tradition, he pointed out that it is one of the essential qualities that help democracy work in the world's largest democratic state, which is populated by 1 billion people of different religions and ethnic groups. I inferred that through the process of argumentation, these groups in India are able to settle their differences and arrive at a consensus on contentious issues. For example, this society with a formal social hierarchy (caste system) has taken steps, like job reservations for marginal groups, to address both the needs of the times and the value of tradition. Such feat could only have been achieved through argumentation and political will.

We can cite some recent cases in our own country just to show how arguing, in its affirmative and critical sense, helps. The additional taxes on alcohol and cigarettes deserve affirmation; while the government's decision to send troops to Iraq should have been subjected to critique or scrutiny. I am sure other issues, like population control and increased spending on social services, could be best resolved by submitting them to the process.

I got to see how Indians engage in meaningful discussion at a seminar on "Development and Nationhood," which was sponsored by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. In that seminar, Sen served as a critique to Lord Meghnad Desai, the main speaker, a respected economist and member of the United Kingdom's House of Lords.

The conference theme was based on Desai's book "Development and Nationhood," where he traced and assessed the economic policies of the Indian government and the decisions the latter had taken. Desai surprised the audience by suggesting a radical idea: the ruling secularist United Progressive Alliance led by the National Congress Party and the fundamentalist opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in a coalition to curb India's fiscal problems. Sen, reacted to Desai's proposition, saying that the ideological differences between the two parties make the coalition totally impossible. But Desai cited the case of Germany, where two parties of opposing ideologies went into a grand coalition that eventually proved beneficial to Germany's economy.

The audience—composed mainly of politicians, business and civil society leaders as well as students—contested and expanded the ideas of the speakers. The uninhibited exchange of views allowed a thorough examination of Desai's proposition.

This brings me to the heart of the matter: We need to have in our country's political sphere quality talk—discussions that focus not on personalities but on ideologies and principles. But first, we must adopt a genuine ideology-based party system. Then and only then will our politicians be able to engage in meaningful political talk. Certainly, our country needs this type of critical discussions to develop better opinions that will guide the decisions of voters and the process of governance.

Fortunately, we already have the spaces for such discussions: universities, schools, civil society gatherings, and a number of media.

The desirable situation is to promote this practice and make meaningful talk a way of life among Filipinos. How? I guess the obvious answer is education that forms critical minds.

Let me end this piece with an observation. In India, rituals punctuate everyday life and routine. One ritual performed at the start of the seminar I attended was the lighting of the jyoti, a tall brass oil lamp. The main speaker and guests lighted the wicks as the host explained the significance of the act. The practice originated probably from a famous Hindi utterance: "Hey, Goddess! Take us all from darkness to light." The ritual reminded participants of the intention of an argumentative event: enlightenment.

By exchanging and questioning viewpoints, one gains understanding and a chance to see things from different perspectives. I would like to see Filipinos arguing not for the sake of arguing, but in the pursuit of enlightenment which should translate into meaningful action.

Anjo Lorenzana, 29, is a VSO volunteer working as an information management adviser to Voluntary Action Network India. He has taken a leave of absence from his work as a researcher and teacher at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Seeing through JP II's conservatism

I REMEMBER the first visit of Pope John Paul II to the Philippines in 1981. I was in my teens in Bacolod City when I saw and heard him speak out against the oppression of the plantation workers by the landowning class. I remember vividly his words back then when he said: "The fruits of the land must be shared equally by those who own it with those who labor tirelessly to till it." This was during the dark days of the Marcos regime; his visit brought about new hope among Filipinos. During that visit, millions came out to greet the "Santo Papa" (as Filipinos fondly call popes).

Like many Catholics, I could not reconcile his conservative doctrine on birth control and a woman's right to choose with his liberal principles of freedom and democracy. However, I now understand why: How could one who is against the death penalty -- because of an underlying belief in the preservation of human life in whatever form it may be -- condone at the same time abortion.

I was not surprised to read later that Pope John Paul II tried to bridge the historical animosity between the Catholic Church and the other faiths of the world. His reason was remarkably simple. He once said to a boyhood friend of his, who was Jewish: "We are all children of the same god." I hasten to say that perhaps John Paul II also believed what Mahatma Gandhi said: "It does not matter what book is being read as long as god is being worshipped and that god cannot only be found in one religion."

If a man's character is his faith, then this simple and honest shepherd from Wadowice, Poland was a true priest indeed. Although the world is a less better place without him, we are comforted in the thought that the streets of heaven must be rejoicing his presence there today.

—SID GARBANZOS
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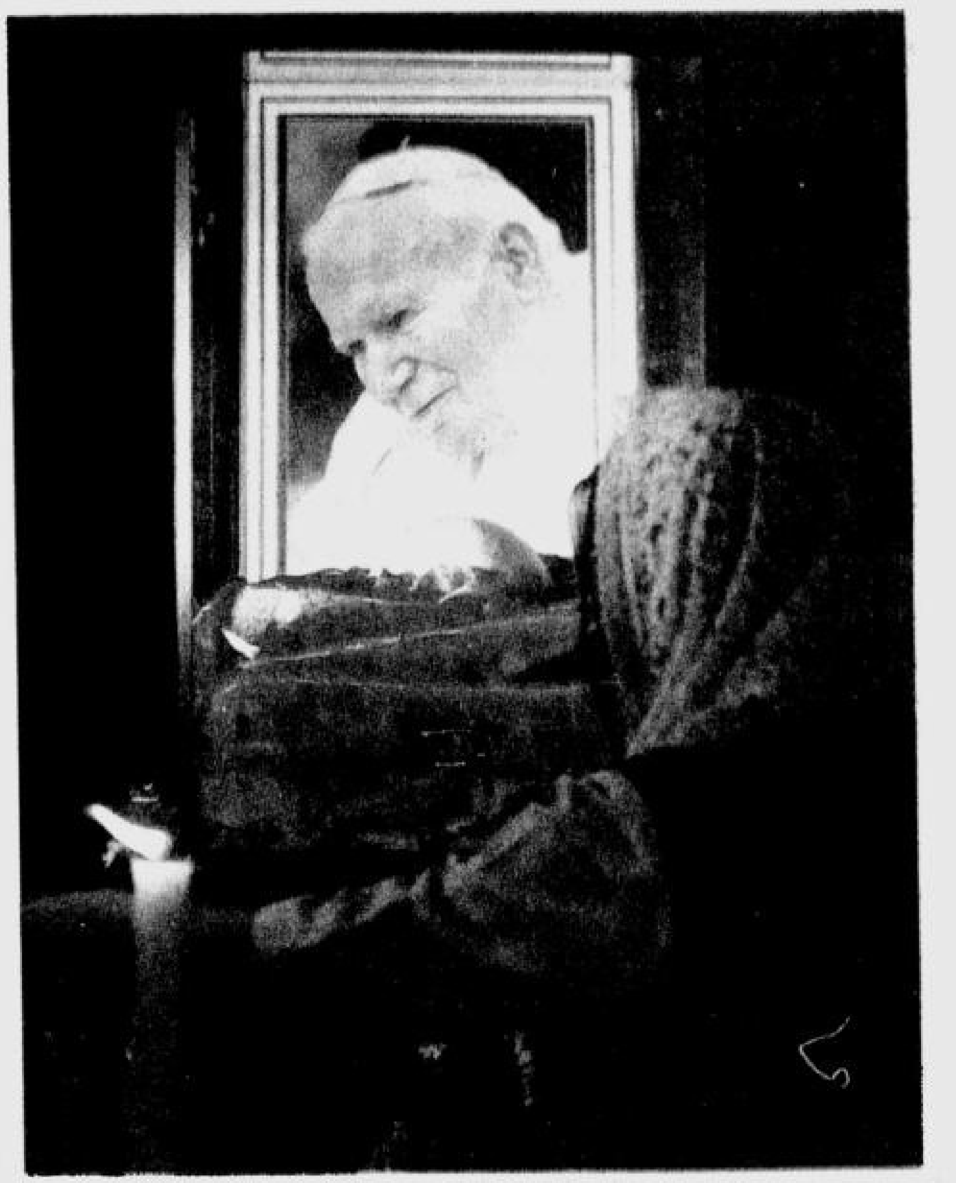

POPE John Paul II: Modern world has found a man for all ages.

'Maxi' expense for quality weapon

IT'S difficult to say if the M-249 SAWs bought by the Philippine Army are seriously overpriced as the story,"Maxi take in Minimi deal," (PDI, 03/6/05) seemed to suggest.

To reach a fair conclusion on overpricing, we'd have to know how much an M-249 and its competing products cost in the world market at the time the contract was signed.

The FN Minimi, introduced to the world in 1974, is called M-249 in Europe and M-249 SAW (squad automatic weapon) in the US Army, which accepted it in 1982.

A weapon's price, however, changes with quantity purchased and in government-to-government deals. Then there are the costs of the necessary accessories that come with each weapon. Price also depends on the source (the manufacturer, legitimate gun companies, a "third party").

There isn't one base price for infantry weapons in the world market. In the same vein, a can of Coke in the United States is a lot more expensive than a can of Coke in the Philippines although it is the same can of Coke. This explains why 1,500 M-249s recently bought by the British Army cost some P1.35 billion (13 million British pounds) or roughly P900,000 (US$16,700) each.

In this light, the Philippine Army's SAWs are cheap. The INQUIRER story said the 1,700 M-249s cost P593 million, including accessories, based on a 2003 contract with a middleman. Simple arithmetic brings the cost per weapon to some P349,000 or $6,500 each, which is at odds with the $5,000 per weapon in the story.

But the British deal is for brand-new, hot-off-the-factory, straight-from-the-manufacturer FN Minimis, including accessories.

Also, the story didn't tell what version of the FN Minimi the Philippine Army bought. The older versions are cheap; the newer ones (like those bought by the British Army) are a lot more expensive.

The cost of a weapon also generally reflects the value its users place on that weapon. The law of supply and demand likewise functions in the world arms market.

If the FN Minimi is expensive, which it is, that's because it has the justifiable right to be expensive. The FN Minimi remains the best SAW in the world today. It is a virtual monopoly in the SAW weapons class.

While designed to kill people, it is also designed to protect the lives of the men who fight with it. This weapon has proven its capabilities in both modes with its ability to unleash 1,000 5.56mm rounds per minute with incredible accuracy. The M-249 is priced for its accuracy, light weight and reliability.

The cost of this weapon must be viewed in relation to its quality. The Army should come clean and tell us the quality of the M-249s they bought with taxpayer money.

A machine gun or any combat firearm that won't work reliably sentences to death the men who fight with it. The officers of the Philippine Army responsible for the Minimi episode, if proven to have bought sub-standard weapons, must be made to pay the highest price possible for their negligence—or greed.

—ART VILLASANTA,
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Taxing the IPPs a matter of equity

I AM glad the Senate decided to debate on the expansion of value added tax, especially in regard to the electricity sector, in effect highlighting some of the abusive practices in the power industry.

The independent power producers (IPPs) and generation companies that are earning billions of pesos in undue profits should be taxed. The tax may be imposed in any form—VAT, income tax, franchise tax, windfall tax, whatever. The point is to tax them. Not because of necessity or because the government needs money. They should be taxed because equity so dictates. They should be taxed because they are earning profits from lopsided contracts that have long prejudiced the consumers.

In the meantime that the review of the IPP contracts has yet to be completed, Congress can already look into the net earnings of the IPPs, one of which has reported earnings that match, almost peso-for-peso, the losses of the state-owned National Power Corporation. At the very least, theirs are windfall profits from undelivered electricity, from the notorious purchased power adjustment (PPA), from grossly overstated minimum energy quantities, and from questionable recovery periods, etc.

The IPP incomes cannot be treated as ordinary incomes, having been earned or derived from extraordinary arrangements and terms that are now subject of consumer protests and complaints. If we cannot immediately enforce criminal sanction against the IPPs, we should at least cut them off from their unjust profits by Congress' exercise of the state power to tax.

—RODEL OCAMPO
rocampo_03@hotmail.com

An ill-timed song for a loved singer

I READ with interest Rina David's column titled "Belief, faith and the Pope" (PDI, 04/05/05). I agree with her that Pope John Paul II might have been too conservative or even "authoritarian" in such issues as women's rights and their role in the Church. But I must say that her article was ill-timed in the sense that it came out while everyone around the world was taking time to cherish the memories of a Pope who, notwithstanding his limitations, accomplished many things not just for the Church but for the whole world. I think the key word here is timing or propriety. It was like badmouthing someone dead in front of his or her coffin (even if on valid grounds).

I also found in bad taste the documentary on the alleged corrupt practices of the Church, which was shown against the backdrop of the Pope's passing. While I had no objections to its actual content, I believe that out of propriety, it should have been aired at a later time. I believe that the proper time to discuss or to air grievances regarding the Church, or the Pope, should have been after everyone had bidden him farewell and a new one has succeeded him (not in a time of grief and mourning), when the public is in a better mind-set to assess the problems of the Church and to think of solutions in a clearer light.

If Prince Charles found it proper to postpone his wedding and Susan Roces, her announcement of her plans in deference to the Pope's death, David, the TV station and the rest of us should have acted in the same vein: reserve their critical views on the Pope and the Church while people were still grieving for him. To borrow a quote, "I may not like the song, but I certainly love the singer."

—KJELL ABOY
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Disappointed with 'idol'

I ADMIRE no end Ramon Tulfo's crusade against graft and corruption in all sectors of society. He readily dishes out credit to those deserving of it as much as he denounces anomalies by people in government and outside. And almost always, this would cost him law suits, even death threats. He calls a spade a spade. For his courage and professionalism, he is worthy of emulation.

However, I noted with keen interest his column "A big fuss over nothing" (PDI, 03/31/05) where he trivialized the First Gentleman's getting a $20,000-suite at MGM Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada during the Pacquiao-Morales fight. "So what if he really got a very expensive room? Wasn't it given to him for free? The government didn't spend a single centavo for that room," he wrote.

It is not a question of whether or not the government had in fact spent for the expensive accommodation. It is a question of propriety and ethics. The President and members of the first family are by law prohibited from receiving anything of value. The FG's use of that expensive MGM Hotel suite smacks of arrogance and insensitivity. Whether paid by him or by the government, or even if it was complimentary, such actuation, to an ordinary person's perception, is extravagance in times of want, warranting legal sanction, if not outright condemnation. Such perception persists even if Tulfo calls the man an "epitome of thrift."

With his apologia for the FG, I am tempted to think that Mon Tulfo's admitted friendship with the man unabashedly compromises his much vaunted sense of propriety.

—BENJIE GUERRERO
Diliman, Quezon City

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Inappropriate publication

THE LETTER of Jun Gumatay (PDI, 04/8/05) on the weakness of the present tourism chair shouldn't have been published by the INQUIRER. Gumatay's short-sighted conclusions and statements are not appropriate for such a quality newspaper.

How can one compare Bangkok with Manila? Bangkok might be congested (isn't Manila?), but at the same time it offers a lot more tourist spots than Manila. Yet, it doesn't mean Manila is less worthy of tourist visits. The same can be said of Rome compared with Luxembourg.

The Philippines has fantastic places to offer foreign tourists. But although it is true that the Department of Tourism, in the past, neglected promoting the Philippines abroad, it is now trying to catch up in this matter.

Let's try to be constructive in our criticism and support what the DOT is doing now. Selling the Philippines is and will continue to be very difficult: we have less developed infrastructure and relatively expensive airplane fares. The DOT, hand in hand with the Department of Interior and Local Government, must help make tourists feel safer. Cracking down on crooked currency exchange dealers and more police visibility in tourist areas would be a good start.

We will not go anywhere with complaints.

—BASTIAAN VAN DE LOO
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Mistaken premise on Schiavo case

CONRADO de Quiros got his central "fact" totally wrong in his column on Terri Schiavo (PDI, 03/29/04). A little research on the Internet would have shown that Mrs. Schiavo wasn't dying until her feeding tube was removed. She was not kept artificially alive. She was not on a life-support machine. She has been sustained by food and liquid through a tube, a very common procedure.

Food and liquid are not medicines but basic sustenance, the lack of which can cause illness and death.

De Quiros speaks of the husband of Terri Schiavo as having "kept by her side all these years." Doesn't De Quiros know that Michael Schiavo is living with another woman, with whom he has two children.

—SEÁN COYLE
P.O. Box 588, 6100 Bacolod City

You're right, our apologies

I ENJOYED reading the column of Manuel L. Quezon III, titled "Interregnum" (PDI, 04/04/05) which I find so illuminating regarding what happens after a pope dies.

Let me note, however, that in the third to the last paragraph of his column, the writer must have meant "interment" instead of the word "internment." This must either be typographical or a proofreading error.

—MARIANO PATALINJUG
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'Enemies of the state'

I WAS at the bloody dispersal of activists by the police at Malate Church in Manila last April 7. Members of different mass organizations, church leaders and human rights workers were supposed to hold a program at the Rajah Sulaiman Park to urge the delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union conference to take a stand against the killing and harassment of human rights workers in our country. But hundreds of policemen attacked us treacherously with their truncheons while we were yet to assemble, beating even the church workers and women who were in front of our group that time. They took away our propaganda materials, placards and banners, and violently dragged our fallen and bloodied companions from our ranks. They arrested more than 20 protesters (most of them needed medical attention because of cuts and bruises in different parts of their bodies), whom they later released after we held an indignation rally in front of the Western Police District headquarters in Manila. I am not sure what case the PNP has filed against them, but I heard policemen saying they would immediately release our companions only if we do not file a case against them.

By law, the police are the "protectors" of human rights. The brutality, arrogance and ignorance the police displayed in action last April 7 explains why many people say that the activists, militants and progressives are not the real "enemies of the state." Then who are they?

—CELIT IMASA
Gabriela member
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What are your memories of Pope John Paul II?

what i am now is bcoz of pope john paul II foundation, inc. my education a lifetime legacy from his goodness.
—Evian, *iloilo*

He was 20ft away from me being prevented by his chief security 2 alight from his bus. He was near yet so far.
—Cesar Marinius M. Reyes, *Agusan del Norte*

the face that changed the world
—archimedes reyes, *angeles city*

A silver medal inscribed of Pope John Paul II which I bought that time in the year 1995 when he visited the Phils. When Pope John Paul II visited the Phils., I was at the corner of P. Noval St. and España
—Greg Saraos, *Intramuros, Manila*

after attending d WORLD YOUTH DAY 1995, when about 2 enter d door of ALITALIA plane he made an about face n turned towards the people.
—willie basa, *laguna*

Idol Ko Si Pop(e)!
—EDWINA S. Meily, *QUEZON city*

A spiritual personality so potent that anyone who he passes by never fails to feel a certain emotion! Ü
—anonymous, *san pedro*

wen i frst saw d pope personally, i was 5 den, i never knew then dat d persona i was seeing 4 real was an important being

Pope John Paul the Great! ü

—tara alcera, *zamboanga city*

bata pa ko nun, karga ko ni dadi habang iniintay namin pagdaan ni Pope sa taft noong 1995. kakaiba ang feeling pag nakita mo siya..
—angeline Fernando, *silang, cavite*

Pope ng mga Pinoy
—gladys tolete, *dagupan city*

From d time i was taught in childhood dat d Pope was d representative of Christ, i didn't feel its true meaning til i saw JP II
—Vivencita R. Togle, *Cainta*

Papa ng masa.
—Roel A. Andag, *Manila*

His addition of mysteries of light to the mysteries of the rosary.
—sandy Villanueva, *lipa*

St. John Paul the Great
—angelo inventor, *iloilo city*

We all feel the loss of the great man, Pope John Paul II. At the same time, we in the Philippines feel privileged for having this great man in our country twice, first in 1981 and second in 1995. In both visits he moved our people to goodness. For example, in his 1995 visit, the crime rate in Metro Manila fell to almost 0% and many persons were moved to acts of goodness because of his presence.
—Miguel Renovado, *Quezon City*

Pope is hope.
—marvin Austria, *quezon city*

JP2, love to u
—aurora de leon, *quezon city*

Spreading PEACE, LOVE, JUSTICE to EVERYONE. Uplifting our hearts through his undying love whatever religion you belong.
—Elvira Angana, *Cebu City*

Pope of the people.
—marvin Austria, *quezon city*

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'Jueteng' take of nat'l PNP execs rises, says intel officer

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The sharing ratio of the protection money for "jueteng" operations in Central Luzon has dropped to 40 percent for several top police officials in the region and increased to 60 percent for some officials at the national level, a source in the police intelligence community said.

The division of spoils has been reversed since Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, took over the post on Dec. 25, 2004, the source said.

That meant that previously, those at the regional police office shared 60 percent of the "intelligensia," as how the protection money is called.

Interviewed on Monday on the occasion of his 100th day at the post, Albano said of the supposed 40-60 percent protection money sharing: "What's that? That's the first time that I heard that."

"I will have that checked," Albano told the INQUIRER.

The source claimed that Albano, a former Cordillera police director, got the Central Luzon post by offering that sharing scheme to his connections at the Philippine National Police.

The source said the regional police post is obtained through the "highest bidder."

"Gone are the days when the selection is based on merits," the source added.

The distribution of the spoils is described as "centralized." This meant that the operators deal directly with Albano or his "collectors," the source said. "Officials of other units were sidelined and never involved."

Director General Arturo Lomibao, PNP chief, has learned of the sharing scheme and the entire jueteng racket but was still having this investigated, another police source said.

But as other senior and junior police officials complained about not getting their "for the boys" share, a portion of which complements the budget for operations, jueteng financiers were themselves beginning to gripe.

"Operators are now complaining about the frequent demands for increases by the collectors," said the source.

The additional money goes to Albano's so-called benefactors, the source added.

A copy of Albano's accomplishment report given to reporters on Monday did not include scores made in the anti-illegal gambling campaign.

The report dwelt on gains made in the drive against terrorism and other major crimes such as kidnap-for-ransom, drug trafficking, kidnapping and robbery.

Told of this observation, Albano said about 12 cases for illegal gambling had been filed while about P32,000 in jueteng bets had been seized in the last three months.

Jueteng in Central Luzon enjoyed a full resurgence after the May 10, 2004 elections despite the police's campaign to stop it. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Iriga gov't, foundation give out 200 free houses to city's poor

IRIGA CITY—The city government and the Gawad Kalinga Foundation have distributed 200 free housing units in Barangay Perpetual Help here to underprivileged residents of the city.

Each house, which is bungalow type, has its own toilet and a kitchen and costs P47,500.

The total cost allotted for the project was P10 million.

Estrella B. Direcho, 47, and her two children, were among the recipients of the free housing project, which is located about 10 kilometers from the city proper.

Before becoming a recipient of a free house, the Direchos used to live in a pull cart for eight months and roamed around the city the whole day to look for reusable waste items to sell to junk shops.

Direcho said that with the concrete house they could call their own, she and her family now felt very much secure and free from any harm and danger, especially during storms.

Mayor Madelaine Alfelor-Gazmen said the construction of free houses would make the city a squatter-free area and would surely help the recipients become responsible citizens.

She said family planning will also be strictly observed, wherein each family will be encouraged to have only four children.

Salvador V. Aguilar, Gawad Kalinga volunteer, said that aside from providing the recipients with free houses, the occupants will also be educated and will be given a source of livelihood, like poultry raising.

He said one of the major objectives of the GK Foundation is to help people regain their dignities. *Michael B. Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cops nab 3 men using fake quarry receipts

MEXICO, Pampanga—Policemen raided several quarry checkpoints here on Monday and arrested at least three men who were collecting sand taxes using fake receipts.

The 10:30 a.m. raids in Barangays San Pedro Camuning and Balas here led to the arrest of Rogelio Guerrero, Adrian Bondoc and Loren Diwa, the police said. Guerrero claimed that he is an employee of the capitol.

Guerrero, according to INQUIRER sources at the provincial capitol, was not anymore employed by the provincial government.

Guerrero showed policemen an identification card signed by Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid during his last term as governor from June 2001 to June 2004.

Still, the three suspects countered the allegations of Mayor Teddy Tumang that they held fake receipts for which they collected P150 per truckload of sand.

The capitol levies an administrative and service fee of P150 and sand fee of P150 per truckload.

Tumang said there were about 30 receipts found in their possession, which were not bound in booklets.

The receipts' upper portions were torn off, he said. In the original Accountable Form 51, as how these government receipts are called, that part showed the serial numbers of the form.

By law, only government employees are allowed to collect taxes if deputized by the provincial or municipal treasurer. The payments should be made at the treasurer's office and not in checkpoints.

Tumang said the suspects were all under the employ, if not supervision, of provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas and lawyer Benalfre Galang, the chief of staff of Senator Lapid.

Arcenas, vice chair of the newly reconstituted provincial quarry task force, said he was confirming if the suspects were indeed capitol employees.

As for the receipts, Arcenas said he still has to get copies of these.

He said he would ask the National Printing Office, the agency printing the official forms of government, to determine if the receipts were authentic.

Galang, the former provincial administrator, said he had not been anymore involved in the work of the task force since he joined the senator's staff.

Tumang said he asked the police to launch the raids following complaints of sand traders.

But capitol sources said Tumang was merely retaliating after Gov. Mark Lapid ordered a stop to illegal quarry operations in Mexico. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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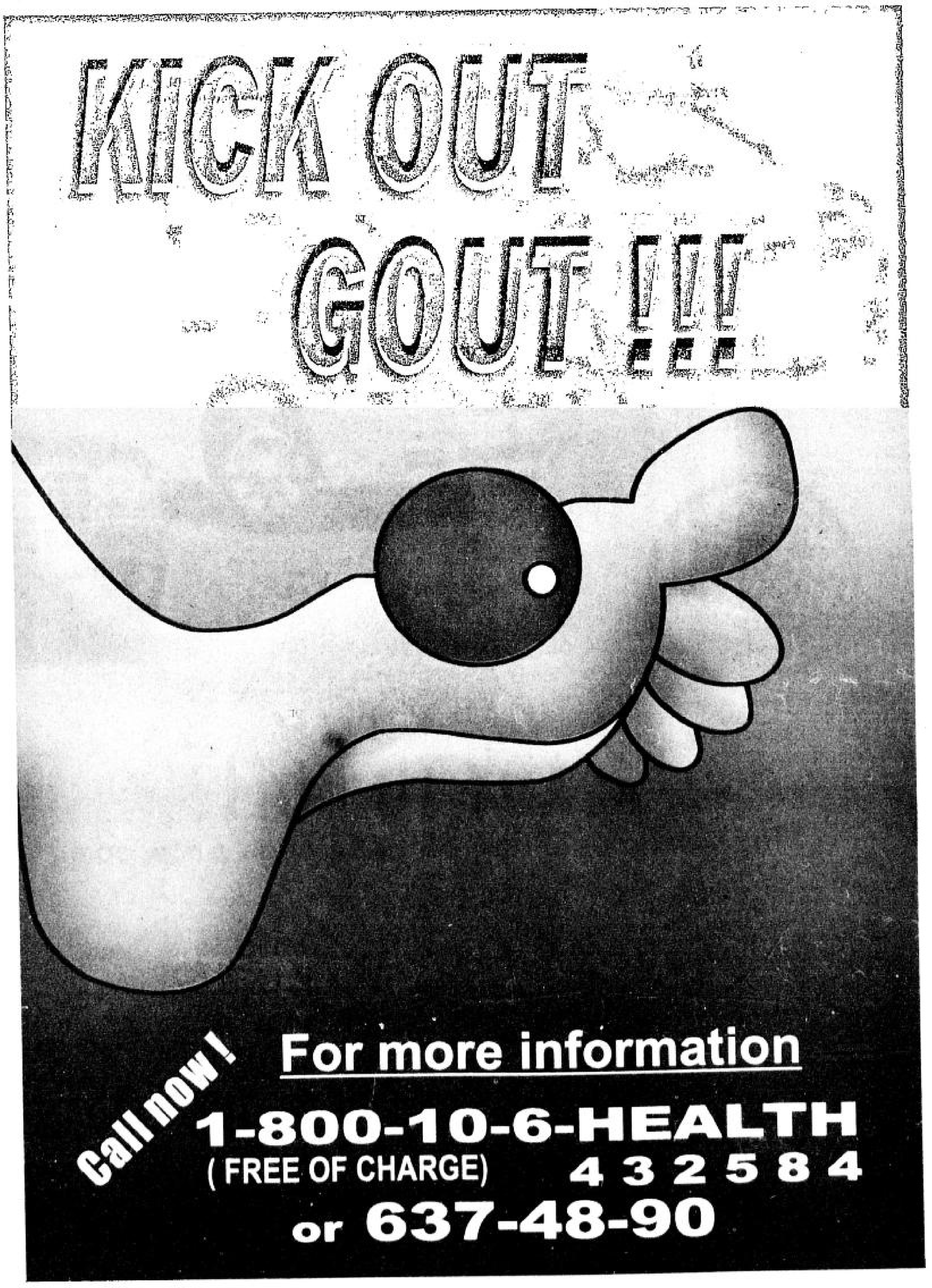

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Transport strike muscle-flexing, say organizers

THE STRIKE called by public utility drivers to protest continued increases in oil prices succeeded in paralyzing what strike organizers said was 80 percent of public transportation routes in Camarines Sur.

The strike, organizers said, was successful at noon in Lucena City and the rest of Quezon province.

Protesters in Camarines Sur warned of a bigger and region-wide strike on April 18 to demand a stop to oil price increases.

Ben Samonte, chair of the provincial chapter of the region-wide organization Concerned Organization of Drivers and Operators, said the nationally coordinated transport strike next week seeks to completely paralyze all transportation routes in the region.

The transport strike yesterday was nationally coordinated by the National Land Transportation Council.

Transportation was disrupted in the second district of Camarines Sur while drivers who refused to join the strike kept ferrying passengers in Naga City and adjoining towns.

Flexing muscles

Samonte said the success of the transport strike in Naga City and surrounding areas was his group's way of flexing its muscles for a bigger transport strike next Monday.

Samonte said the April 18 transport strike had been coordinated by Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston) to cover Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao provinces.

Rafael Duque, president of the Camarines Sur Federation of Transport Operators/Drivers Associations and Cooperatives (Cam. Sur Fetrodaco) Inc., said the drivers' participation, even though not complete, had brought home the message and made the people aware of the need to unite against further oil price hikes.

The Camarines Sur Fetrodaco coordinated the province-wide transport strike with cooperation from organizations of other drivers.

In Iriga City and the provinces of Albay and Sorsogon, public transportation remained normal.

In Lucena City, only a small group of tricycles was seen plying the streets.

Misinformation

Tonton Chavez, president of the Pinagsama-samang Asosasyon ng Tsuper and Operator sa Timog Katagalugan, said an attempt to sabotage the strike through false information had failed.

He said the striking groups were not calling for a fare increase.

"Our main call is to scrap the oil deregulation law. That's the main culprit. Definitely, we will still pursue this strike to end that law," he said.

Most of Manila-bound buses also stopped ferrying passengers.

The bus drivers complained that some strikers in the San Pablo City area littered the road with metal spikes.

Mini-buses traveling from Lucena City toward different towns of the province also stopped operations.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar in Lucena City, ordered the dispatch of several military trucks to help ferry stranded commuters.

School authorities in Lucena City were forced to suspend classes.

Work at the provincial government of Bulacan and several municipal government offices were suspended at 3 p.m. as jeepney drivers staged a transport strike in several areas in the province.

Shorter work hours

Local officials shortened the working hours to give employees enough time to catch rides home.

Officials of the 9,000-member Jeepney Transport Council (JTC) said they staged the strike to also protest the increase in toll rates at the newly rehabilitated North Luzon Expressway.

Danilo Ignacio, JTC president, said the strike paralyzed at least 80 percent of major routes in Bulacan.

Ignacio said Tamaraw FX shuttle services to Metro Manila from Baliuag, Malolos, Meycauayan and Sta. Maria in Bulacan; San Fernando in Pampanga, and Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija were also affected by the strike. *Juan Escandor Jr. and Delfin Mallari, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

FROLIC CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A group of employees frolics on one of the islets in the Hundred Islands National Park. Tourists have started to arrive in record numbers on the islets following an aggressive promotion by the government of Alaminos City under Mayor Hernani Braganza.

Ex-legislator survives grenade attack

TACURONG CITY—Former Rep. Guimid Matalam of Maguindanao has survived what he believes was an assassination attempt.

Matalam, a two-time member of the House of Representatives, said a rocket-propelled grenade landed on the roof of his house in Barangay Alip, Datu Paglas, Maguindanao, about 20 km from here.

"I don't have known enemies but that rifle grenade was meant to harm me or any member of my family," Matalam, who lost in last year's gubernatorial elections in Maguindanao, told reporters.

He said the rifle grenade was fired from afar and that it pierced the roof and landed on his bed.

Fortunately, minutes before the blast, the 50-year-old former congressman went out of his room to go to the toilet.

No one in his household was hurt but the grenade created a huge hole on the roof and bed, he said. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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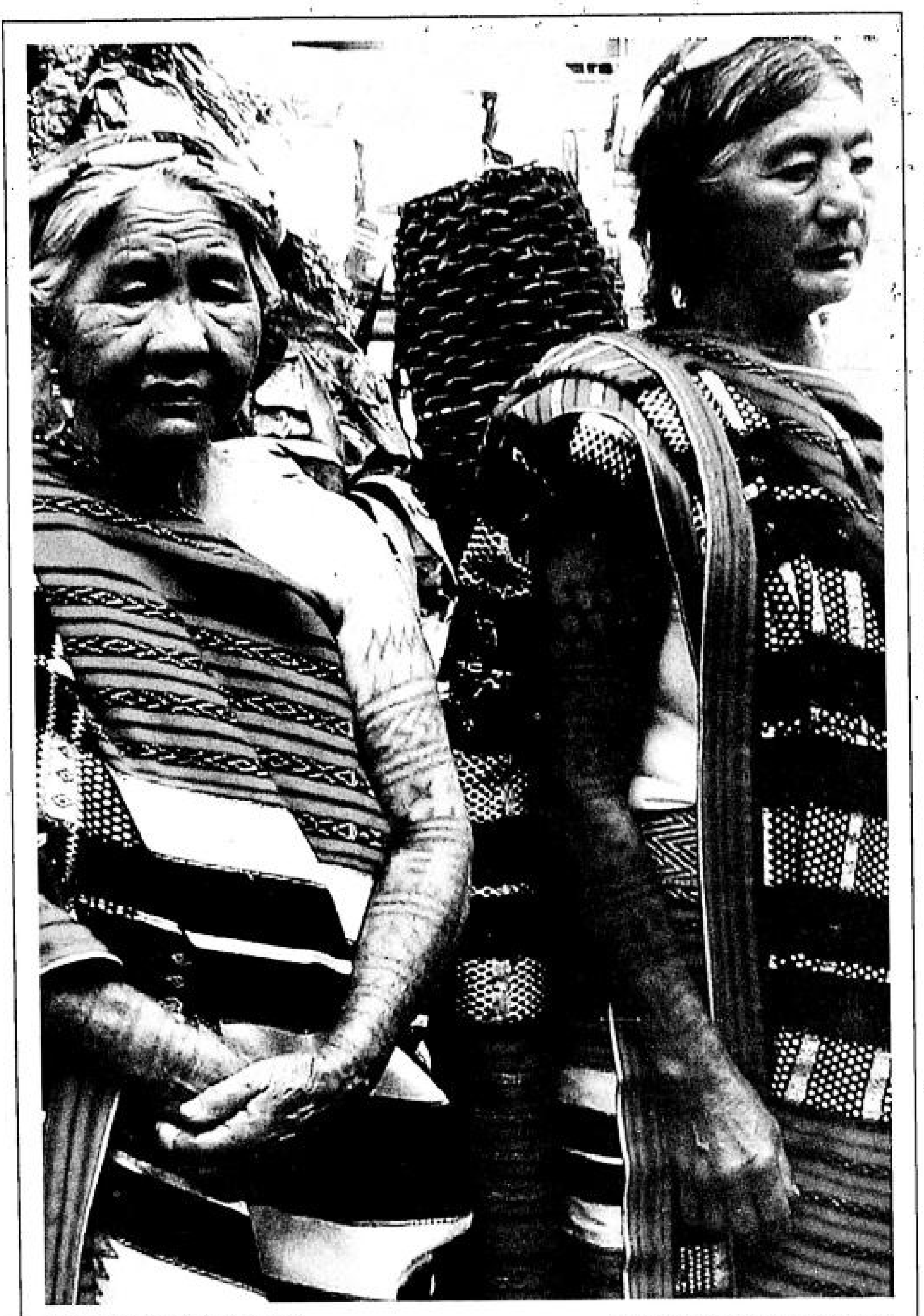

TATTOOED STORIES

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Elderly women of Mt. Province wear tattoos in their arms to show their tribe's stories and their legacies. Few of their relatives now wear these tattoos because the art has died.

Cops say Esperat killing solved with arrest of 4

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police said they consider the killing of journalist Marlene Esperat as a closed case following the arrest of the alleged gunman and his accomplices on Friday.

But officials in Manila appear confused over whether to identify or not the suspects and the alleged mastermind.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes refused to identify the arrested men and said it was too early to identify the mastermind.

But Reynaldo Wycoco, chief of the National Bureau of Investigation, said one of the suspects, Randy Grecia, had pointed to Sumail Sekkak, a former agriculture regional director in Central Mindanao, as the mastermind of the killing.

Wycoco further quoted Grecia as saying Sekkak's wife, former employee of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, was also involved.

Esperat had filed graft charges against the couple, leading to their removal from office.

"We consider the Esperat murder solved. But we are still digging deeper to know the mastermind," said Chief Supt. Antonio Billones, police chief of Central Mindanao.

Billones was the head of the Task Force Esperat created by PNP chief Director General Arturo Lomibao when he visited the victim's family on March 27 in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat.

On Wednesday, Randy Grecia, alias Jake surrendered to a police official here whose wife was his distant relative. Grecia was allegedly one of the three lookouts when Esperat, an anti-corruption crusader and columnist of local newspaper The Midland Review, was gunned down inside her residence in front of her two children on March 24.

He identified the gunman as a certain Estanislao Bismanos and the two other lookouts as Jerry Cabayag and Owe Bancare.

Billones said police arrested Cabayag and Bancare inside Gaisano Mall in Davao City on Friday afternoon.

A few hours after the arrest of the two, police proceeded to Panabo City in Davao del Norte. There, Bismanos was caught with the help of the Panabo Police.

The suspects arrived here Saturday evening and were immediately placed under the custody of the CIDG.

Billones said Grecia admitted during investigation that they were given an initial P50,000 and another P70,000 after the killing.

Billones said the suspects are not fall guys. "They are not fall guys. They are the suspects," he said.

Rynche Arcones, Esperat's daughter, told the INQUIRER that they still have to see whether those arrested were really the triggerman and the lookouts.

"We have not yet seen them," she said. She was hoping that the mastermind will soon be arrested.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes announced the arrests and said the suspects would be brought to Manila.

Reyes, without identifying which of the suspects did which, said "(one) of them gave the money, one was the gunman."

He said authorities are not yet in a position to identify the mastermind.

"We still have to conduct (further investigation)," added Reyes, who is also chair of Task Force Newsmen, created by President Macapagal-Arroyo to solve journalists' killings.

Reyes took exception to reports that the government is monitoring members of the media for allegedly being "enemies."

"Please don't allow that misrepresentation to continue," he said.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said one of the initial suspects who surrendered a few days ago tagged Sumail Sekkak, a former regional director of the Department of Agriculture in Central Mindanao, as the mastermind of the slaying. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Norman Bordadora and Margaux Ortiz, in Manila*

C. Mindanao leader in palay production

COTABATO CITY—Central Mindanao was the leading palay producer in Mindanao in 2004, data from the Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco) showed.

Of the total 3.4 million metric tons of total palay production in 2004, Central Mindanao contributed 1.08 million metric tons, according to Medco.

Central Mindanao is composed of the provinces of North Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Saranggani and the cities of Cotabato, Kidapawan, Tacurong, Koronadal and General Santos.

With this development, Mindanao is living up to its name as the country's food basket by posting robust performance in palay and corn production in 2004, propped up by continued area expansion, reliable irrigation system and good weather condition.

Last year's palay production in Mindanao registered a growth of 5.9 percent from the previous year's 3.2 million metric tons.

A large bulk of palay output comes from Central Mindanao which contributed 1.08 million metric tons to the total production. Northern Mindanao and Caraga also boosted the total palay harvest by contributing 544,590 and 503,939 metric tons, respectively.

Data obtained from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics (BAS) cited that the increase in palay production was achieved as production area sharply expanded to 1.02 million hectares, the biggest expansion recorded since 1992.

Farmers were also able to reap benefits from rain that provided the much-needed irrigation for vast rice fields. BAS noted that there was an improvement of yield among irrigated and rainfed farms.

Among the major palay-producing provinces in Mindanao are Zamboanga del Sur, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Bukidnon.

Meanwhile, corn production in Mindanao hit a double-digit growth of 11.5 percent following a three-percent expansion of harvest areas and operation of rehabilitated irrigation facilities.

The availability of quality seeds and competitive price markets have likewise encouraged farmers to plant more corn than other crops.

These positive factors brought a total of 3.1 million metric tons of corn produced in 2004, way above the 2003 corn yield of 2.8 million metric tons.

BAS data also showed that the high corn production was mainly due to an expansion in Caraga's production area that notably increased from only 49,839 hectares in 2003 to 296,747 hectares in 2004. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Gov pursues village forums to know needs of Cavite folk

CAVITE Gov. Ayong Maliksi continued his program of knowing the pulse of the people of Cavite through a series of forums with residents of the province's villages.

The governor, in a press statement, said he first visited on April 3 the town of Silang, Cavite, to start the forum, which he dubbed Maliksing Talakayan-Ugnayan.

The forum, attended by 2,000 Caviteños, is just one of the series of barangay-based discussions that Maliksi said he started during his first term.

He said he believed that the people of Cavite were intelligent enough to know their needs and the answers to these.

He stressed that it should not only be during times of election campaigns that government leaders like him should visit even the remotest barangays of their areas.

According to him, it will be good for the people to feel that they have a government that gives importance to hearing their voices.

He said another objective of the forum is to unite the people of Cavite who were divided during the last elections.

Among the issues raised in Silang were hospitalization, housing, water supply, education and youth programs.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **May 04, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FIT Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila,** among all interested rice suppliers for the **supply of maximum 200,000 MT, 5% MOLSO long grain white rice, 5% and 15% brokens in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags** with an appropriated budget from corporate resources of **Php 3.7B. Source countries shall be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, Australia and/or U.S.A.**

Any interested suppliers are required to submit quotations for all specifications on CFR FO basis, Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of fifteen (15) days from receipt of NFA of the complete set of original documents for payment. Arrival period as follows:

Arrival Period	Percentage of Volume to be Offered
Not later than 15 June 2005	At least 50%
Not later than 15 July 2005	Balance

Government suppliers and private suppliers who have delivered to the NFA **within the last two (2) years (2003/2004) and do not have a bad track record may be awarded the following maximum volume:**

SUPPLIER	VOLUME
Government (with good track record)	150,000 MT
Private (with good track record	25,000 MT
Government/private (without track record)	15,000 MT

However, suppliers and/or source companies with pending import-related accounts/liability prior 2003 are considered to have bad track records and are not allowed to participate in the bid.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification. Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable stanby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable stanby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements and instructions to bidders maybe secured starting **12 April 2005** thru **MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ,** Assistant Department Manager and **MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO,** Division Chief III, **Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.**

The terms of reference and offer sheets will be available from **April 12 to 28, 2005** (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The **pre-bidding conference** will be held on **April 21, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.**

Submission of bids will be on May 04, 2005 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m. at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila. Opening of bids** will start exactly at **10:00 a.m.**

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

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Quarry operators' head wounded in gun attack

FLORIDABLANCA, Pampanga—The president of the quarry operators' association here was shot and wounded on Sunday, the second violent incident that had occurred in the local sand quarry business in a month.

Antonio Buyson was parking his jeep at the family garage in Barangay Poblacion at 7:30 a.m. when a man armed with a .45 cal. pistol approached and shot him, one of Buyson's sons said. Buyson, 64, was hit in the neck.

His son said Buyson has strong reasons to believe that Raymundo Ko, general manager of Tai-Phil Sand Quarry Inc., was behind the assassination attempt.

The son said his father received a death threat from Ko before the incident.

Santiago Beltran Jr., Ko's lawyer, dismissed the allegations.

"My client would not even think of that. He is a good man," said Beltran.

Through Buyson's complaint for pollution, the Environmental Management Bureau issued Tai-Phil a cease-and-desist order on its operations on March 18.

According to the EMB, Tai-Phil discharged untreated wastewater and "*buga*" (volcanic mud and pumice stones left after screening the sand) into the Gumain River here.

The EMB also suspended the firm's environmental compliance certificate over its failure to construct a wastewater treatment plant.

Buyson's last action before the attack was to demand for the implementation of the cease-and-desist order that he said Tai-Phil had defied through its continued operations.

Beltran said Ko and Buyson failed to arrive at a settlement during a dialogue at the EMB last week.

The attack on Buyson happened after Cabancalan barangay captain Andy Manacmul was killed in an ambush over his effort to collect quarry taxes last month.

Policemen arrested the suspect, Zaldy Ramos, an aide of Gov. Mark Lapid, on March 24, a week after Manacmul was slain. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

VINCENT CABREZA, PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

EVOLUTIONARY FAITH
The sisters of Sanctuary, a convent-cum-gallery that promotes environmentalism, prepared this diorama of clay during a workshop on Evolutionary Faith during Pope John Paul II's burial. The clay figures emulate Manuggul jars, ancient artifacts portraying passage from life to death.

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Board member denies Mikey slapped him

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A provincial board member on Monday denied reports that Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo slapped him on April 5 over his supposed inaction on the alleged sand quarry taxes scam.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, Board Member Nelson Calara described the report as "ridiculous and malicious," and "unfair" to him and Arroyo.

He said Arroyo, the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, was "even-tempered and even jovial nature."

The INQUIRER report was confirmed by at least three Pampanga officials.

Arroyo denied the incident in a phone interview on Sunday.

"It never happened, there was never any dispute or problem between me and Congressman Mikey," Calara said.

It was the supposed victim's first statement on the issue since the INQUIRER tried to reach him on Friday. Calara, who arrived at the provincial capitol at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, declined an interview and asked that the INQUIRER refer to his statement.

Calara said he and Arroyo had been "close friends" even before Ms Arroyo aspired for a Senate seat.

The board member said the report came "from people wishing to besmirch" his and Representative Arroyo's reputation. "There was absolutely no basis for the report," he said.

Sources said Calara, who was summoned to a room in a restaurant here, quietly but nervously took Arroyo's scolding.

"Mikey was angry. He didn't like the inaction of Nelson. He wanted him to exercise his responsibility," a local official said, citing the information relayed to him by one of Arroyo's advisers, who was in the room when the incident happened.

Calara, chair of the provincial board's natural resources committee, voted against the resolution urging Gov. Mark Lapid to deputize the Natural Resources Development Corp. as the collection arm of the provincial capitol on sand taxes. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

3 paymasters probed for ₱10M in advances

DUMAGUETE CITY—Three paymasters, one from the Dumaguete City government and two from the Negros Oriental provincial government, have been placed under investigation for failing to liquidate cash advances totaling to almost P10 million.

Dumaguete City Mayor Agustin Perdices said the city has filed a complaint at the Office of the Ombudsman in the Visayas against a former paymaster of the city after she failed to liquidate her cash advances.

Perdices said the employee, whom he declined to identify, was transferred to another office of the city government pending the results of the investigation by the Visayas Ombudsman.

The mayor said the city's audit office had certified late last year that the employee's unliquidated cash advances had reached P1.7 million. However, the city's new audit head indicated that the unliquidated cash advances only amounted to more than P100,000.

Perdices, however, said it was clear that there was an irregularity.

Negros Oriental acting provincial treasurer Danilo Mendez, on the other hand, disclosed that he already filed an administrative complaint against two of his disbursing officers for a similar anomaly involving some P8 million.

Mendez, who also refused to name the employees, said the complaint was filed with the governor's office. He said one of the two employees failed to liquidate more than P5 million while the other could not account for more than P2 million in cash advances.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Baguio hotel owners want ID system vs terrorism

BAGUIO CITY—The summer capital's hotel industry wants an exclusive identification system, weeks after the Department of Justice identified the city as a terror target.

The proposal was contained in a report of the city's recovery task force, which was prepared by a group of hoteliers led by Anthony de Leon, general manager of Baguio Country Club.

The report earned the ire of Mayor Braulio Yaranon, who said the city did not need an identification system.

"You cannot impose an ID on every citizen. We don't need it. What we need is a good intelligence system, and we have proven already that good [community networking] will work better [in ferreting out] terrorists," he told De Leon on Wednesday.

"There are only a handful of terrorists, so why will we inconvenience every citizen to capture a few people?" he added.

New Quiapo

Some of the task force members stressed in a press conference that immediate reforms must be undertaken to reverse the city's evolution into a new "Quiapo."

They used the populous Manila district to describe the growing number of migrant traders from Mindanao and other lowland vendors who peddle their wares along the streets of Baguio's downtown area.

The sight of vendors grilling milkfish on street corners has been disorienting high-end tourists, Catherine dela Rosa, a travel consultant, said.

"It has divided Baguio [into two tourist areas]. [The tourists booked by] Baguio Country Club and Camp John Hay no longer go to town [because of the street chaos]," said Lourdes Ng, an official of the Baguio Association of Restaurants.

Nicolas Tabora, chair of the Baguio Tourism Council, said the ID system was incorporated in a comprehensive tourism plan drawn up during a tourism summit in October last year.

Short term

He said De Leon's task force identified the ID system as a short-term goal, although it remained a policy proposal that had not been detailed for the city council to work on.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Mayor Bernardo Vergara suggested imposing a uniform Baguio identification program in 2003, at the height of terror threats from religious extremists abroad.

But the state of the country's computerization program made the proposal too costly.

Erwin Manaois, Baguio's information technology supervisor, said a uniform identification system could work efficiently if local governments and their data resources were linked by modem or through the Internet.

The state of the Cordillera computerization is "still at its infancy" due to bad telephone or satellite connections, and poor investments in local government computer inter-phasing systems, said Gabriel Aquino, regional coordinator of the National Computer Center.

Yaranon said the government might instead focus on building neighborhood watches to assist in police intelligence work. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Cordillera tribe enforces own ID system

SIX-MONTH-OLD Lang-ayan Filog with his aunt, Jennifer Contigue, wait for a ritual to baptize and give a name to him during the first Lang-ay Festival last week in Bontoc, Mountain Province.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

By EV Espiritu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BONTOC, Mt. Province—The indigenous tribe of Balangao in Natonin town has no need for a national identification system.

It continues to practice its own method of naming newborns, which has ensured community harmony and fostered communal loyalty among the youth.

Under a ritual, parents announce to the clans that a new member is joining them and will be contributing to the welfare of their world, said Cordillera photographer Tommy Hafalla.

Hafalla's career has been focused on documenting the culture and history of communities in the Cordillera.

The newcomer's name becomes part of the communal stories and will be passed on to collective memory, which immortalizes each individual, he said.

This means that, in the Igorot culture, everyone is accountable to the community as soon as he or she is granted an identity.

Lang-ay Festival

Six-month-old Lang-ayan Filog is the latest beneficiary of the cultural system called "*ar-al-lag*," which the boy underwent on April 7. The capital town of Bontoc was then holding its first Lang-ay Festival to commemorate the province's 38th founding anniversary.

Lang-ayan is the son of Hubert Filog and Melba Nayassang-Filog, both members of the Balangao tribe who prefer to live here. The boy earned his name when the sun reached its zenith.

The *manfuni*, the ritual's officiating priest, placed the boy at the center of a communal circle, where a *cañao* (feast) was being held. Men and women started dancing around the child.

Bernard Foryasen, a local historian working with the Natonin municipal government, traced the dances to a more primitive period when the community was expected to transfer individual strengths and levels of endurance to the new tribal members.

No bad luck

The most striking aspect of the ritual is called the "*tat-aragan*." The *manfuni* drinks the *linpeh* (rice wine) and spits the liquid on the ground before screaming, "*fuuutfutaragan!*" The expression is used to drive away bad luck.

Foryasen said the "*tat-aragan*" would shield Lang-ayan from all harm he might encounter in his lifetime.

"It is the belief of our old folks that once a child is born and has undergone the *ar-al-lag*, and when he is strong enough to walk or to climb mountains, he will always be safe," he said.

The ritual requires celebrators to present Lang-ayan with pieces of equipment as representations of the boy's future life.

Material symbols

The elders required the clan to provide him with a *lanchuk* (garden hoe), *pag-ey* (unhusked rice) and meat to grant him abundant food; *choros* (bolo), which represents his future security and defense; and a bag of *fuwa* (betel nut) to guarantee more friends.

Lang-ayan also received a *legaw* (woven winnower), *urchan* (ladder), *limpeh* and an animal figurine.

"These materials symbolize all of the things a newly named child will need when he grows up," Foryasen said.

Hafalla said rituals for naming the newborn were common to all indigenous Filipinos. In Ifugao, for example, the "*bag-ur*" is the closest depiction of "*ar-al-lag*," he said.

Many of the modern Balangaos, who attended the ceremony, assumed that it was an ordinary baptism. Lang-ayan's parents are Catholics.

Marcelina Foryasen-Esteban, a community elder, had to explain the process to the witnesses, taking them step by step into the meaning of each ceremony.

The festival's appellation and the boy's new identity may sound alike, but that is coincidental.

Lang-ay means "sharing," which describes how the community opens itself up to newcomers. But Lang-ayan, like many others from his generation, derived his name from his lineage.

Villagers say treasure hunt turned water dirty

MALAYBALAY CITY—Residents living along the Malapgap Creek in Barangay Sinangalan are opposing treasure hunting operations which, they say, were turning their water sources unsafe for drinking and unusable for laundry work and bathing.

In a petition sent to the city government, 93 residents demanded that the treasure hunting operations be stopped as they had disrupted their lives due to water problems.

In the past two weeks, they said they had to hike to the next village to fetch water for drinking.

They also feared that landslide would occur during heavy rains.

Barangay councilman Dante Disalan also sought the immediate intervention of Bishop Honesto Pacana.

Vice Mayor Ignacio Zubiri said they had already ordered a stop to the treasure hunting operations in the area last week.

"There is an extensive damage in the area so we have to stop this group especially since they have been operating without a permit since January," Zubiri said.

Last week, the city government and the city environment and natural resources office went on a fact-finding mission and saw the extent of damage in the locality.

Zubiri disclosed that the Mines and Geosciences Bureau also issued a cease-and-desist order to the treasure hunters. It is sending its own fact-finding team to the area next week.

Disalan said the International Recovery Group of the Philippines Inc. (IRGPI), the group behind the treasure hunt, had continued digging despite the city government's order.

Herman Chris Estrella, the operations manager and one of the directors of IRGPI, denied Disalan's claim.

"We are just moving out the backhoe to a safe place since the last area we dug is not compact and may cause the backhoe to roll down the pit when rain comes," Estrella said in a telephone interview.

Estrella acknowledged that his group's permit to operate for this year was still being processed and that they had not held any consultation meeting with the people when they began their operations. The MGB only required them to seek permission from the barangay chair, he said.

IRGPI began the diggings in Malapgap in 2002 using hand implements. They stopped operations for over a year and resumed in January using a backhoe.

Estrella said the area was about 5 kilometers from the residents and it would be impossible for flood or landslide to reach the community.

The residents have demanded that they be provided with a water pump so that they could draw clean water.

Estrella said he was going to meet with the residents to talk about the matter.

He said his group was willing to provide the needs of the residents as part of its operations.

They would also rehabilitate the area after they were through with their diggings, he said. Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Bad food downs 17 in Bulacan wedding rites

SAN RAFAEL, Bulacan—At least 17 people attending a wedding reception in Barangay Capihan on Saturday here were taken to a hospital in Baliuag town after they felt nauseous, vomited and complained of upset stomach.

The victims, 10 of them aged between 1 and 16 years old, were declared out of danger and discharged from the Baliuag District Hospital on Monday.

Delia Torres, chief nurse at BDH, said the victims suffered from dehydration.

Torres said they were still determining the real cause of the food poisoning. She said a representative from the Department of Health (DOH) had already checked on the condition of the victims.

Some of the victims had complained that some of the food served during the wedding reception tasted sour and could be spoiled, she said.

One of them, Rosalinda Giron, 55, said the menudo (a meat dish) or the dessert they ate during the party could have been the cause of the poisoning.

But Ramon Vergel de Dios, 37, the bride's brother, suspected that the frozen chicken that the family bought in Pulilan for the wedding feast was the most likely source of the poisoning.

De Dios said they heard some comments from guests that the color of the chicken meat was darker than usual.

He said the family was sad over the incident but his sister and her husband could not help the victims pay their hospital expenses because they have spent all their money for the wedding.

The INQUIRER learned that Bulacan Rep. Lorna Silverio had paid most of the hospital and medicine expenses of the victims. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Gov, execs open new trail to Mt. Pinatubo

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

PORAC, Pampanga—A more spectacular and challenging trail to Mt. Pinatubo has been opened here on Saturday.

The new trail is the second after the more established path in Sta. Juliana in Capas, Tarlac, which has become the favorite entry of tourists to the volcano. The Aetas in Sta. Juliana began guided eco tours for visitors in 1993.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 were recorded as the world's worst eruptions in the second half of the 20th century.

Gov. Mark Lapid, a native of Porac, opened the latest route on board his Toyota Land Cruiser. More than 40 off-roaders trudged behind Lapid. Three hours later, the pack reached the abandoned Aeta village of Inararo, 5 km east of the volcano.

Starting from Cangatba and passing through Sapang Uwak, Hacienda Dolores, Bale Hangin, Patal Balas, Batang Tui, Mt. McDonald and Mt. Negron, the route took 23 km of rugged, roller-coaster type of terrain.

Still covered by thick ash, the same fine material that Mt. Pinatubo spewed out in June 1991, the group left thick billows, bringing visibility down to zero.

They slowed down, taking also a minimum 20-meter distance each to let the ash settle and for them to get a good view of the road. There were many steep rises and several blind corners along the way.

At least two waterfalls gave refreshing breaks. The one in Sitio Mapali gurgled with hot spring water.

Mayor Exequiel Gamboa said he started developing the new trail three years ago. Apo King, an Aeta chieftain, helped the crew of the municipal engineer carve the new road through two bulldozers.

Most parts of the road were not carved out of the edges of hills and mountains but on top of these, making the route best for more adventurous travelers.

Inararo, towering at 1,158.4 meters (3,800 feet) north of Mt. Dorst, provided a good view of the 1,745-meter high volcano and its environs.

From a viewing pad established there, Apo King, the descendant of Tomas King, a known Aeta warrior during the Japanese invasion, showed the Zambales towns of San Marcelino to the south and Botolan to the west. On the north was Sta. Juliana in Capas.

On the south, a long, wide gray strip jutted out. "That's the Sto. Tomas River," Apo King said.

Far north, the headwater of the Pasig-Potrero is thick with greenery while sand canyons are found downstream.

But Inararo is still a ghost village, with the 129 families who used to live there preferring to remain at the Villa Maria resettlement, some 60 km south of here, said barangay captain Mary Bulatao, 42.

The exodus of her people began on June 10, going to as far as Palayan City in Nueva Ecija.

The climb to the crater, which the INQUIRER joined, took three hours. It required descending a steep cliff, crisscrossing a stone-littered plateau, hurdling several hills and making the steep ascent.

Governors' group vows to fight move to divide Cebu into 4

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A move to divide the Cebu into four provinces drew strong opposition from the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP), which even vowed to provide legal assistance to Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia to question it, even all the way to the Supreme Court.

The LPP, chaired by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, passed the resolution on Friday opposing, "in the strongest possible terms," the bills in the House of Representatives seeking the creation of three more provinces out of the present Cebu province during the first of the governors' two-day 5th general assembly held in Tagbilaran City.

Aumentado said the governors also created a legal panel to extend legal assistance to Governor Garcia. It is composed of Governors Bellaflor Angara-Castillo of Aurora, George Arnaiz or Negros Oriental, Josephine Sato of Mindoro, and Ed Lara of Cagayan province. Former Cebu Gov. Pablo Garcia, the father of the present governor, will be the panel's adviser.

"It is a legal panel that would defend the league in our advocacy but this would also assist Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia in opposing the move to divide Cebu which may reach to the Supreme Court," Aumentado said in Cebuano in a radio interview yesterday.

Aumentado said the league decided to tap former Governor Garcia as adviser because he is a known constitutionalist and was respected by his colleagues during his stint in Congress.

The resolution opposing the break-up of Cebu was passed unanimously by the governors upon the motion of Catanduanes Gov. Leandro Verceles, Aumentado said.

At least 50 governors out of the 79 members of the league were present in the assembly. Copies of the LPP resolution will be furnished the Office of the President, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The resolution was passed after Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia made a 15-minute presentation on why the LPP should oppose the bills creating three more provinces in Cebu.

Aumentado said they were convinced by Garcia's presentation that all the other provinces would be affected if three more provinces are created in Cebu as it would mean that the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) share of each province would be slashed by almost P4 million. Each of the 79 provinces in the country now is receiving P96.7 million in IRA share.

Aumentado also said that Garcia has also explained to them that the creation of three more provinces would result in a diminution of the mother province as it would only be left with 1,900 sq km, a clear violation of the requirement that a province should have a land area of at least 2,000 sq km.

Aumentado cited as example the case of Negros Occidental during the interim Batasang Pambansa wherein an assemblyman in the province proposed the creation of Negros del Norte.

Aumentado said the move was rejected by the Supreme Court.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Pope visit left deep imprint on Tondo parish

From page A1

The dots connect easily, coincidences acquire meanings, and random events form a well-designed chain. This is the stuff of faith for members of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage church on Del Pan Street in Tondo.

For what else but Papal "inspiration" could explain the following:

Since the Pontiff's visit, the depressed cluster of 24 barangays covered by the parish has produced "three priests and two nuns," said Clemente San Gabriel, president of the local laity council, in an interview last Thursday.

"They were still toddlers when the Pope came," San Gabriel recalled. He was referring to Fr. Ernie Parone Pessimo, who is based in Nueva Ecija; Fr. Erwin de la Cruz, now in Hawaii; Recollect Fr. Arnel Diaz; Sr. Juanita Payawal, now in Cotabato, and Sr. Maritess Tullo.

San Gabriel said the five were all children of laity leaders serving the parish.

"There were many others in our area who studied to become priests but did not make it. It was only after the visit [that there were successes]," he said. "I think that's an effect of the visit. The community was inspired."

The parishioners thanked the late Jesuit priest Fr. Pedro Verceles for arranging the papal visit to Tondo, given the Pontiff's tight itinerary and considering that the parish had no history to speak of and its structure was only "40 percent" finished at the time.

Verceles, then a guest priest in the parish, could have used his "connections" in the Vatican when he sent a letter of invitation to the Pope in December 1980, two months before his Philippine visit.

But they all agreed that what apparently swayed the Pope to drop by was the list of "signatories" which Verceles attached to the invite: The letter contained signatures of 1,000 Sunday school pupils from around the Tondo area.

Reliving the moment

Some of the pupils formed a choir and welcomed the Polish pope with a song in his native tongue.

But there was one, much younger resident, who stole the show that frenzied morning.

Santos said she was too young to remember her papal kiss. But there were plenty of others more than willing to help relive the moment for her, starting with her mother Belen, a social worker in the parish then.

The Pope, standing on a makeshift stage in front of the parish, singled her out in the crowd, Santos said. He saw her because her mother held her up above the throng of flag-waving, rosary-dangling faithful.

"We were more than three meters away from the Pope, so I had to be passed around through the crowd to get to him," she said.

After getting a hug and a kiss from the Pope, she was again passed around until she reached her mother.

"But this time, people made the Sign of the Cross after handing me over, others tried to touch my clothes. It's as if I was a Sto. Niño image," she said with amusement.

Doves at her feet

Something more curious happened a month after the visit, she said, recalling a story told by her mother.

"She took me to the Sto. Niño Church (also in Tondo) during the Feast of the Annunciation. After Mass, two white doves were released from the church.

"My mother (who was carrying me) was surprised because both doves wandered towards us and landed on my feet, before quickly flying off."

Since the papal visit, Santos has been known in her barangay as "the baby kissed by the Pope."

When she was growing up and had tantrums, people would pacify her by saying " 'the Pope might get angry" if she didn't stop crying.

She feels blessed

Asked how she was taking her measure of fame, Santos, now 25 and single, said, "I feel blessed. It [also] makes me mindful of my attitude. It's been like a responsibility to always keep my finesse as a woman."

A practicing Catholic, she once contemplated on becoming a nun. She believes that her papal blessing has extended to the rest of her family.

Her late father once worked as a movie studio cameraman. Her mother is a security guard in a casino. Despite her parents' modest wages, Santos and her four siblings all went to private schools, with the youngest still studying.

"Whenever we fell on hard times, somebody—like a relative or family friend—would come up and offer to shoulder our school allowance. In every trial we faced, we managed to find a solution," said Santos, the third child, who won a scholarship in grade school and supported herself through college at St. Paul's in Manila by working as a student library assistant.

A Psychology graduate, Santos now works for an herbal drug company.

Shrine for the Pope

She keeps a diary of her reflections on her papal encounter. Her only regret is that she doesn't have souvenirs or photographs, only memories of that special moment as told to her by others.

When she was rushed to the Metropolitan Hospital on April 3, friends and household members found the coincidence hard to ignore. Specially since they were all glued to CNN for developments in Rome.

"You and the man who kissed you are down with fever at the same time!" Santos recalled them saying.

She was later diagnosed with ampebiasis and only learned about the Pope's death the day after.

The parishioners mourned his passing by putting up a shrine in front of the church, which also displays a marker commemorating the 1981 visit.

The shrine has a short chronicle—written by Santos—of that historic visit and the precious moments that Tondo folk spent with John Paul II.

Latin America may get its first pontiff

From page A1

plained. "But it is not extraordinary when one considers the Church is universal."

Rivas said it was a given that a Latin American pope would emphasize human rights and development.

But she cautioned against reductionism.

"There's no single Latin American characteristic or a single Latin American pope," she said. "We may have some characteristics but personalities are personalities. They are different."

The Latin Americans that have often been mentioned are Cardinal Claudio Hummes of Sao Paolo, Brazil; Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina; Colombian Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy; and Mexican Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera of Mexico City.

The name of Nicaragua's Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo has also cropped up, Rivas said. Bravo is 79.

Latins have the numbers

Latin America has the numbers on its side. It is home to practically half of the world's 1.1 billion Catholics and it has 21 among the 115 cardinals expected to vote in the conclave.

Although the number is not even half of Europe's 58 cardinals, a Latin American cardinal may get the vote of Asian, African and even North American cardinals.

There may also be European cardinals who may feel the time is ripe for a non-European pope.

A non-European pope is "not an impossibility," said Bataan Bishop Socrates Villegas. But he insisted that, in the end, it would be the Holy Spirit who would decide.

"In the choice (of pope), it is not the nationality but the spirit that matters," Villegas told the INQUIRER. "If the Holy Spirit wills this man to be pope, it is going to be that."

Rivas agreed.

A pope is for the world

"It is not important from where the pope is coming," she said. "He should be the spiritual father of all Catholics. The pope will not be for Latin America but for the world."

Villegas' and Rivas' explanations are spiritual rather than political, and seemingly do not take into account the political maneuverings that happen in an election both divine and human.

Still, the fact that a member of the Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines, which has a traditional orientation, would be open to a non-European pope is a sea change in attitude.

A generation or two ago, a non-Italian pope was inconceivable.

Divided clergy

"The field is wide open, and a non-Italian and a non-European pope is possible," Stooke said.

But clerics and religious caution against simplifying Latin America, pointing to the late Peter Hebblethwaite, a long-time Vatican journalist, who wrote: "The theory that the next pope will come from Latin America overlooks the polarization of the Church there."

Hebblethwaite was referring to the tensions and sometimes hostility between conservative prelates and socially conscious and politically inclined bishops on the continent.

Hebblethwaite had criticized the late Pope for replacing or retiring liberal bishops and appointing conservative ones.

Media savvy

Save for Carrera, who tends to be conservative, the Latin American "candidates" sport views that mix the traditional with the new.

Hummes is theologically conservative but has advocated social justice for the poor. Castrillon defended the Church during the sexual abuse crisis in the United States, but has also mediated between leftist guerrillas and the military in Colombia.

Madariaga is a popular churchman, while Bergoglio is low-key.

Madariaga may have the best chance because of his winning personality, his media-savvy ways (he campaigned for debt relief with the rock band U2), and his moderate stand, some Vatican watchers say. Like John Paul II, he is a polyglot.

Madariaga is also a secular priest, that is, not a member of a religious order. Historically, a pope is drawn from the secular clergy. A pope coming from a religious congregation is rare. Hummes is a Franciscan while Bergoglio is a Jesuit. There has never been a Jesuit pope.

But Madariaga is only 62. Vatican observers said the cardinals might be predisposed to a shorter papacy after John Paul II's 26 years and might prefer an older pope.

Secret of Fatima

An Italian "restoration" is not certain. During the long papacy of John Paul II, a common Roman joke referred to the "third secret of Fatima" as "Repent and pray or you will have another Polish pope."

European cardinals have also been strongly tipped.

Leading non-Italian Europeans include German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith; Cardinal Godfried Daneels of Belgium, and Dominican Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Austria.

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2 brother cops face slay raps

By DJ Yap

THEY were cops and brothers.

The two suspects in the killing of an automotive center manager over a parking space dispute in Quezon City were brothers who turned out to be police officers stationed at Camp Vicente Lim in Laguna.

At least three witnesses have come forward to pinpoint PO1 Georlando Guadania, 44, and his brother PO1 Ariel Guadania, 35, as the suspects in the murder of Patrick James Gochingco, 29, at Bitoon Circle on Commonwealth Avenue on April 2.

The Guadanio brothers are active Philippine National Police members under the Calabarzon Police Regional Office (PRO-4A).

Yesterday, Gochingco's wife Ann Ruth, 29, charged the Guadania brothers with murder before the Quezon City prosecutor's office. Her complaint bore the affidavits of witnesses Edmund Agramon, Leo Mark Bonales and Julito Orbase.

The witnesses said they were drinking with Jason Platon, 23, when they heard Georlando from a treehouse shouting at Gochingco, who was about to park his car.

The suspect was telling Gochingco not to park in front of No. 173, 3rd Street, but the victim could not hear him, and parked his car just the same, according to the complaint.

Angered, Georlando got down the treehouse with his brother and went inside their house. When they came out, Georlando was carrying an Armalite rifle, while Ariel brandished a .45-cal. pistol, the witnesses said.

Georlando opened Gochingco's car and forcibly dragged him out, the witnesses said.

Gochingco introduced himself as a neighbor and asked them not to hurt him, but Georlando shot and hit him in the chest. Platon, who was behind Gochingco, was also hit in the chest.

Gochingco was killed instantly, while Platon was rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center, where he recovered.

MMDA APPEAL TO PHONE FIRMS

'Stop billboard battle on Edsa'

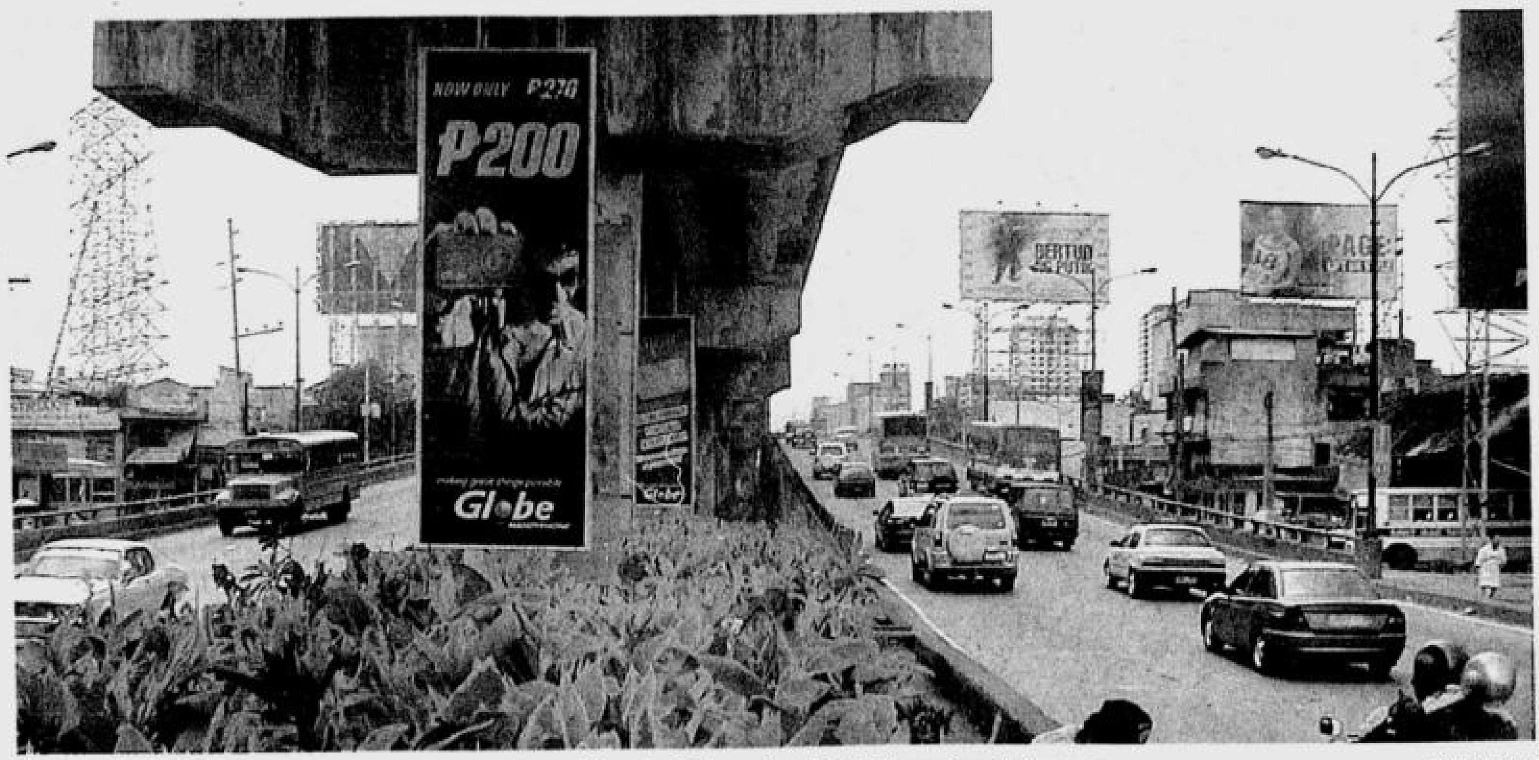
By Tarra V. Quismundo

TAKE the battle for clients elsewhere.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando aired this appeal to giant telecom companies Globe and Smart yesterday, as he noted the proliferation of advertising billboards and signages through the busy stretch of Edsa.

"Principally along the road right of way of Edsa, there's too much proliferation of these billboards and posters. Basically, they are illegal, and are posing hazards to road users," Fernando told reporters in a press conference yesterday.

Fernando said different-sized tarpaulin billboards and signages advertising the services and promos of the two largest mobile phone companies have cluttered the stretch of Edsa, and had been installed on posts and walls that obstruct the roadway.



IF HE has his way, MMDA chief Bayani Fernando would prefer Edsa to be rid of billboards and signages.

RUDY ESPERAS

"I ask them to stop this, or if not them, maybe their contractors can ask the companies to stop, and no longer enter into contracts [with the companies]. Besides, it seems they (Globe and Smart) are making profit, and there is no reason for them to add to our problems," said Fernando.

"Don't make Edsa your battleground," warned Fernando. Meanwhile, he made an exception of private property rented out to ad firms.

The MMDA chair added that Smart's and Globe's ads have even come to compete with the agency's safety and informative road signs.

"We could not find anywhere else to put our safety signages, that's why the posters and billboards have to be removed," said Fernando.

He added that a voluntary ad pullout by the two telecom giants may eventually dissuade other companies from making the widely-used thoroughfare as their promotional front.

"Maybe if they stop, other companies would no longer advertise along Edsa," Fernando said.

As the MMDA had been held by court from removing billboards on facilities of the Metro Rail Transit, including those that encroached on Edsa, the agency could only undertake clearing operations on limited public property along the avenue.

Hence, if the warning would not be heeded, the MMDA could proceed to demolishing billboards and posters of the telecoms on areas along Edsa where they lawfully could do so, said Angelito Vergel de Dios, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Executive Director.

30-hour water cutoff looms

By Tina G. Santos

CONSERVE water.

This was the advice Maynilad Water Services Inc. (MWSI) officials gave to residents of Manila and Quezon City as it prepared to replace old pipes and make adjustments in various areas in the two cities.

Officials of the water concessionaire said the water cut-off will take effect starting at 10 p.m. Thursday, April 14, until 4 a.m. Saturday, April 16.

The water service interruption will affect residents living along Legarda flyover near corner Nagtahan, Sampaloc; Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard corner Mangga Street, Sta. Mesa; Carlos Palanca Street corner Globo de Oro Street, Quiapo, and Sobriedad Street corner Batanes Street, Quezon City.

The areas in Manila that will have no water supply are the entire Sta. Mesa area, including Bacood; Sampaloc area, bounded by G. Tuazon, Earnshaw, Legarda and Ramon Magsaysay; whole San Miguel area, including Malacañang; Quiapo area; University Belt area; Sta. Cruz area, bounded by Quezon Boulevard, Mayhaligue, Jose Abad Santos, C.M. Recto, Estero de Magdalena and Pasig River's Balic-balic area; Pandacan, and Paco.

In Quezon City, affected areas will include Barangays Don Manuel, Doña Aurora, San Isidro, Sto. Niño, Santol and Doña Imelda.

On the other hand, areas that will have low water pressure to no water include portions of Binondo, including the area bounded by C.M. Recto, Rena Regente, Estero del Binondo and Pasig River; and portions of Sta. Cruz.

The repair and maintenance works are part of the water firm's continuing program to upgrade and improve its water service to its customers in the West Zone, Maynilad officials said.

Mandaluyong folk warned: Segregate garbage or else...

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

START segregating your garbage. Or face sanctions.

Not only will your garbage be ignored by collectors. The Mandaluyong City government is also ready to issue violation receipts to you.

Or so city officials warn.

An ordinance was already in place as early as two years ago. Seeing enforcement is lacking, the city government is claiming it would intensify the implementation of its solid waste management program this time.

In February, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources cited Mandaluyong City as among the government units in the metropolis which have been ignoring provisions of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

"Formal notices will be issued to all commercial and business establishments including all public and private markets, hospitals, clinics and health centers that solid wastes emanating from them must now be properly segregated prior to collection," city administrator Ernesto Victorino reported to the Office of the City Mayor last month.

In a statement, the city public information office also said the city government had also formed its own Solid Waste Management Board to ensure the ordinance was being strictly implemented.

Victorino also said the issuance of violation receipts to those found violating the city ordinance would be reinforced.

Violators shall be made to pay P500 and will be required to render one day of community service and attend a seminar.

Second offense means a fine of P1,000, two days community service and a seminar.

Third offense means a fine of P1,500, three days community service and a seminar.

If the violator refuses to pay fines, he will be arrested, the 3-year-old city ordinance also said.

With a report by Rio Ribaya

MNLF scores vs government troops anew

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I WATCHED the interment Mass for Pope John Paul II on TV while I was in bed with the flu.

It was a very touching sight. Millions of people of different faiths and cultures around the world, honoring the man they loved so much.

Why was John Paul II loved so much? Because he practiced what he preached.

He preached love and reconciliation and extended a hand of friendship to all religions. John Paul II was the first pope to pray inside a mosque, a Protestant church and a Jewish synagogue. He also visited Buddhist and other Oriental religious shrines to show respect for those faiths.

John Paul was probably the only pontiff who asked forgiveness for the shortcomings of the Catholic Church in the past.

His humility—asking forgiveness for his Church's past sins—endeared him to people of other religions. No other pope did that.

* * *

Government forces are being battered by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Sulu.

Latest reports received by this writer from reliable sources in the field said MNLF forces destroyed a V-150 armored vehicle in an ambush between Lanao Dakulah and Silangkan towns.

Four government soldiers were killed and five others were wounded in the ambush. They were aboard the armored vehicle.

The ambush was not reported in the media.

Gen. Efren Abu, Armed Forces chief, is not handling the Sulu situation well.

President Macapagal-Arroyo made a poor choice in Abu.

* * *

A husband-wife team of former government officials is behind the assassination of columnist Marlene Esperat, according to reports I received from Mindanao.

Esperat was shot in General Santos City last week of March.

Both the husband and his wife were removed from office because of Esperat's exposés.

The husband and his wife deserve each other because both have killer instincts. Both are also Muslim.

* * *

Fouzi Bondagjy, the Saudi Arabian businessman who's been harassing me with libel suits, will again be frothing in the mouth when he learns that his drop-dead gorgeous ex-wife, Sabrina Artadi, met with me yesterday.

Sabrina complained that Bondagjy had also been harassing her with a case he filed with the Shari'ah court in Mindanao. He wants her to return to reconcile with him, but the woman says no way because he stinks.

How could she agree to return to Bondagjy when, she said, she was a battered wife and she couldn't stand his duping other people of their hard-earned money.

Bondagjy, Artadi says, has been using his money and influence in harassing her and their children. The children don't want to return to their father.

Hey, Arab, leave your ex-wife alone and accept the fact that she wants to lead a new life with, perhaps, another man. Hehehe!

Pinoy teachers in ISM to get ₱398-M windfall

From page A24

insurance benefits and medical benefits.

Sto. Tomas added that there should also be a provision stating that the CBA shall be effective with respect to the 1995-1998 economic provisions, and for a term of five years starting from July 1, 1995, with respect to representation; and "other earlier agreements, if any, between the parties."

Proof of compliance

She also directed the parties to submit their proof of compliance within 10 days from receipt of the order.

The DOLE assumed jurisdiction over the labor dispute between ISM and International School of Alliance of Educators (ISAE) on Sept. 22, 1995, on several issues that include salary and benefits parity among foreign hires and local hires.

On June 10, 1996, the labor department issued a resolution directing the parties to execute their CBA and recognizing the validity of the school's policy on salary and benefits disparity between its local-hired and foreign-hired teachers.

The decision was immediately appealed by the union before the Supreme Court, reiterating its stand that granting higher salaries to foreign hires constitutes racial discrimination against Filipinos, in violation of the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

No reasonable distinction

The high court sided with the union in its June 1, 2000, decision, rejecting the school's practice of according foreign-hired teachers higher salaries than local hires.

It said that there is no reasonable distinction between the services rendered by each class of employee.

As the school's motion for reconsideration was denied with finality, an entry of judgment was issued on Dec. 12, 2000, followed by the transmittal of the records to DOLE for execution on June 21 the following year.

Adjustment of salary

Upon the motion of the union, the DOLE issued an order allowing the issuance of a writ of execution on Feb. 19, 2002. It incorporated in its dispositive portion the adjustment of the salary level of local hires equivalent to those of the foreign hires.

The school immediately petitioned the Court of Appeals, alleging that the DOLE misinterpreted the dispositive portion of the Supreme Court's June 1, 2000, decision, particularly on the date of effectivity of the provision on salary and benefits parity of its local-hired and foreign-hired teachers.

Forum-shopping

On April 23, 2002, the CA issued a temporary restraining order, later rejecting the union's opposition to it. The appellate court also ordered the school's board, superintendent and counsel to explain why they should not be held in contempt for forum-shopping.

On July 16, 2002, the Supreme Court issued a resolution denying the school's appeal for reconsideration of its July 9, 2002, resolution. It subsequently issued an entry of judgment on June 2, 2004, and affirmed the necessity to immediately execute its judgment.

Meanwhile, the CA, in its Jan. 12, 2005, ruling, stated that the resolution of the Supreme Court shows that the issues brought up by the parties have already been clarified.

With the CA's latest resolution, the DOLE, for it part, said it clearly yielded to the previous conclusions of the Supreme Court.

Construction of Edsa loading platforms starts

By Tarra V. Quismundo

BENT on showing its intent of improving traffic along Edsa, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has begun roadwork on the fenced stretch of the avenue that has spurred the agency's hanging dispute with the San Juan local government.

MMDA chair Bayani Fernando yesterday announced that the agency has proceeded with the construction of mid-road loading and unloading bays on the southbound stretch of Edsa fronting Camp Crame, the stretch it had fenced up to the dismay of San Juan stakeholders.

"There would be three loading and unloading platforms between Santolan Road and Ortigas, and there would be two openings for entry and exit within the pink fences," Fernando told a press conference yesterday.

The loading and unloading bays, the first of at least 20 platforms the agency had initially planned to construct throughout Edsa, would be constructed to be on an elevation similar to a sidewalk, a meter wide, and as long as two bus lengths.

The platforms would divide the two outer lanes that had been turned into bus lanes, a physical barrier meant to discipline bus drivers and commuters alike by organizing and speeding up loading and unloading on designated points.

By design, the construction of the platforms would entail carving part of the sidewalk fronting them, to create wider space for the loading bays.

Fernando said roadwork would only be undertaken at night to avoid disrupting daytime traffic flow. The project would be finished in about a month, he added.

For the roadwork, portions of the pink fences were dismantled for the meantime. The project began just as San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito was about to take down the fences on the portion that reached his jurisdiction, in heed of complaints from San Juan stakeholders.

Owners of the town's business establishments had apparently been peeved by the fences that deterred private motorists, including their clients, from going into the streets leading to San Juan, which had been fenced off.

"Edsa is going to be a limited-access road so we can make traffic there fast and unimpeded. Private motorists and stakeholders should accept that some of their privileges will have to curtailed for the benefit of public utility vehicles," said Fernando.

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil ■ Assistant Editor Cenon B. Bibe Jr.

Pinoy teachers in ISM to get ₱398-M windfall

By Jerome Aning

A TOTAL of 178 Filipino teachers at the International School Manila (ISM) now stand to get back wages amounting to P398 million.

This was made possible after the Department of Labor and Employment finally resolved the long-drawn issue on the disparity of salary between local- and foreign-hired teachers at the ISM.

In a nine-page order issued on April 4, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas directed the school management and the union to comply with the Supreme Court ruling on the labor dispute.

Sto. Tomas also ordered the execution of a collective bargaining agreement, incorporating provisions that include the adjustment of salary levels of local hires equivalent to those of foreign hires retroactive to July 1, 1995.

"Pursuant to the terms of the 10 June 1996 Decision and 19 March 1997 Resolution, and the 01 June 2000 Supreme Court Decision, the School and the Union are hereby ordered to comply with directives contained therein, and to execute within 10 days from receipt of this Order a Collective Bargaining Agreement," the DOLE order said.

The 178 Filipino teachers at the ISM, some of whom have already retired, were pressing their demand for payment of around $7.3 million (about P398 million) in back wages.

Apart from the economic provision which shall be effective July 1, 1995, to June 30, 1998, the DOLE also ordered the parties to incorporate a provision on the scope of the bargaining unit, with membership in the bargaining unit confined to local hires as well as provisions on retirement pay, sick leave, life

PINOY/ A23

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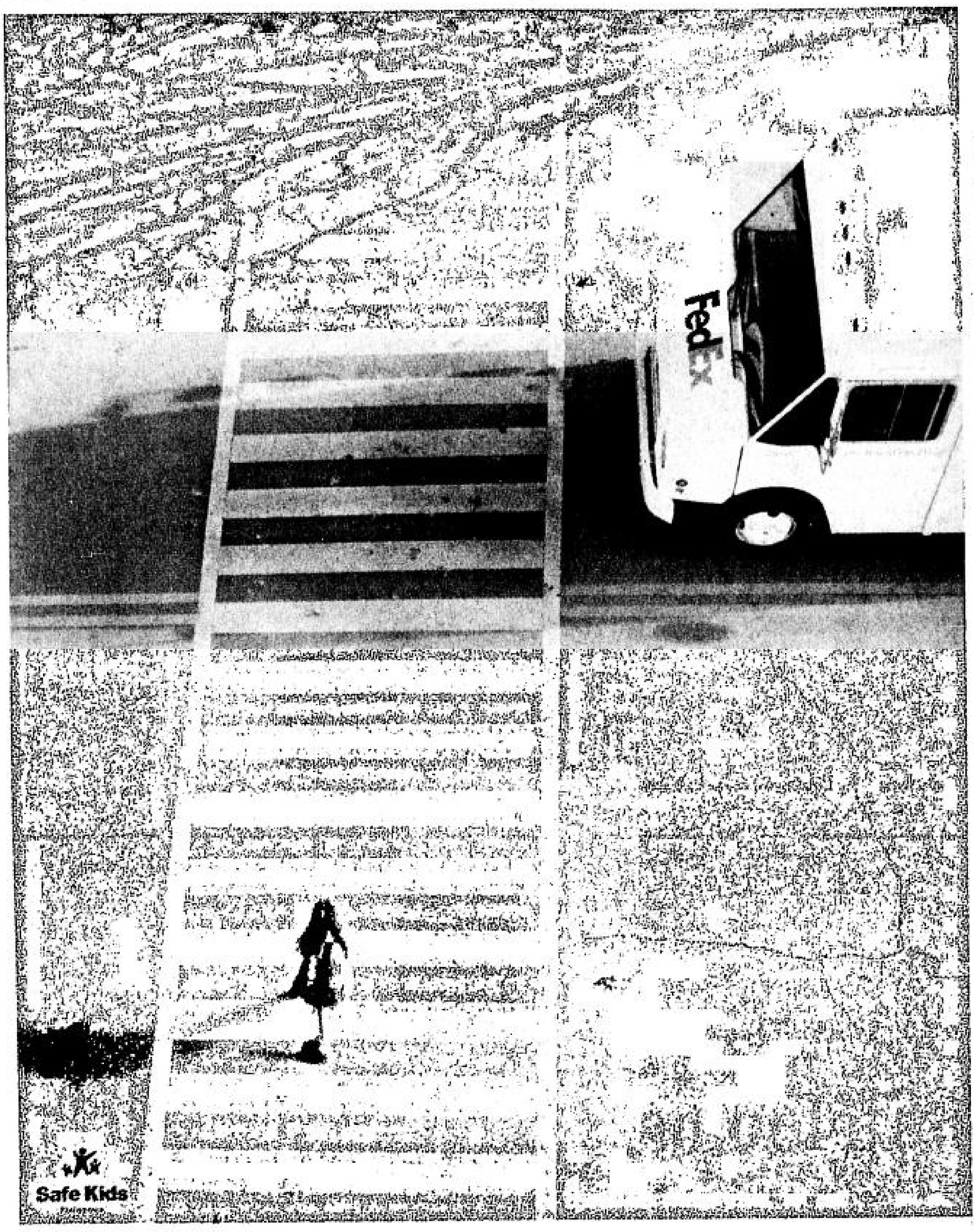

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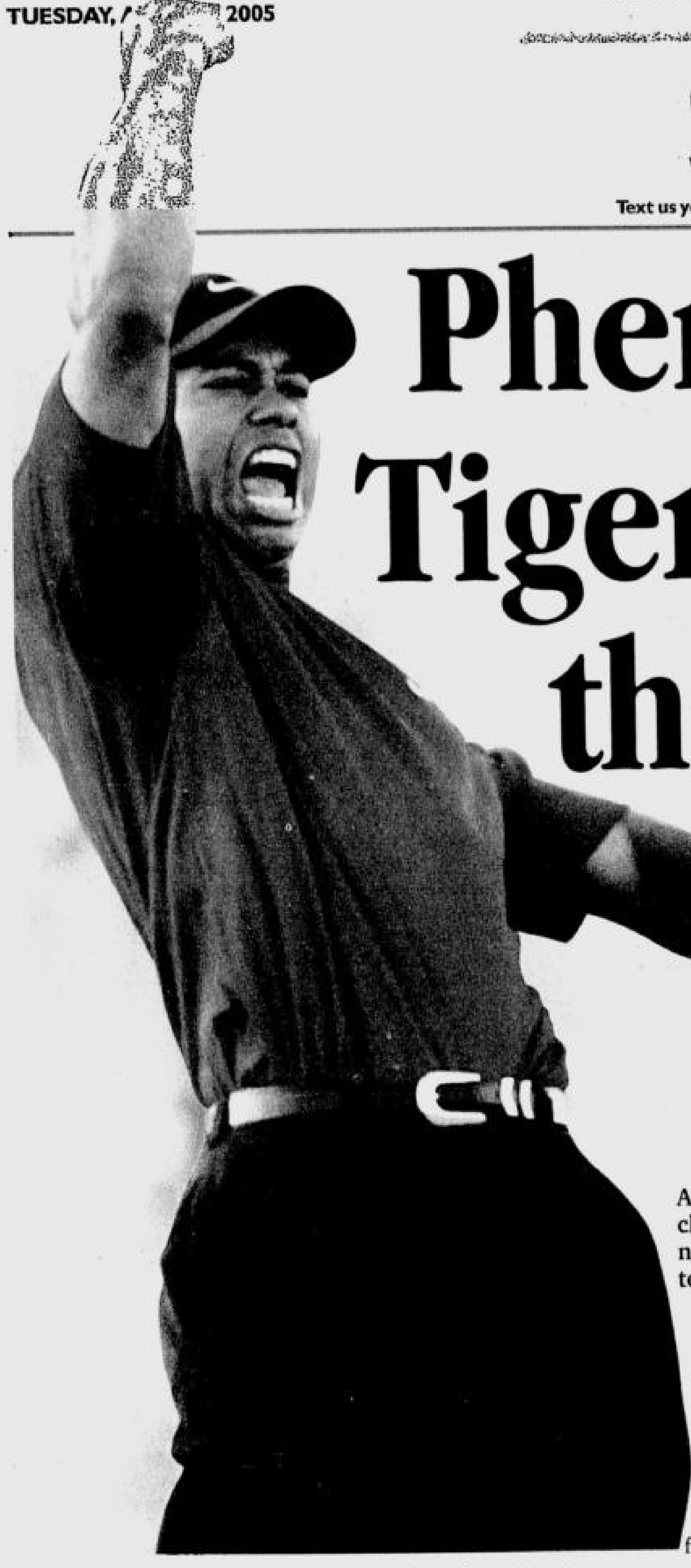
More Masters stories on A28-A29



TIGER'S GROWL: A triumphant Woods jubilates after making the putt that gave him his fourth Masters title in nine years. REUTERS

Phenomenal Tiger back as the Master

Woods takes 9th major after surviving DiMarco in sudden-death

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Tiger Woods held off a gutsy last-day challenge by fellow American Chris DiMarco to win the ninth major of his career in a playoff for the 69th US Masters on Sunday.

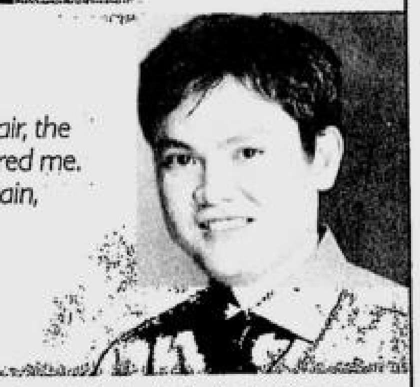
Woods, who had led DiMarco by three strokes going into the final round, sank an 18-foot birdie putt at the first extra hole to secure his fourth green jacket and 43rd PGA Tour victory.

As the winning putt dropped at a sun-drenched Augusta National, he broke into a smile and punched his right fist triumphantly into the air.

"This is special," said the 29-year-old American after ending a barren run of 10 majors since his previous triumph at the 2002 US Open. "To hit two of the best golf shots I hit all week on that first extra hole was pretty sweet."

Woods struck a perfect three-wood off the tee on the 18th hole and fol-

PHENOMENAL/ A26



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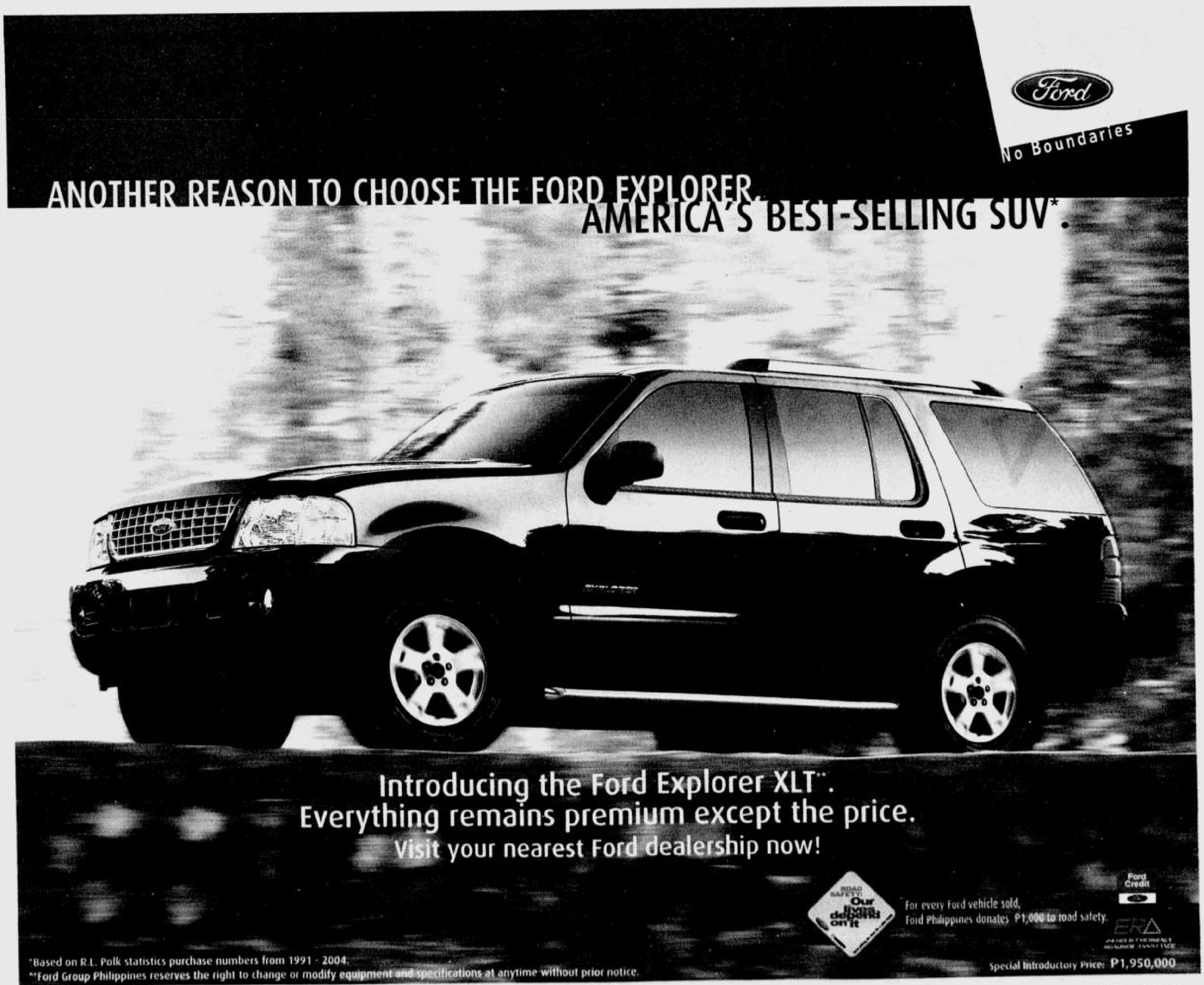

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ASIAN F3'S QUICKEST

Mikola by a sweep

By Musong R. Castillo

INDONESIAN Ananda Mikola perfectly steers his car around a bend en route to victory. RUDY ESPERAS

ROSARIO, Batangas—Other than the top two Filipino drivers crashing out early, the second race of the 2005 Addict Mobile Asian Formula 3 Super Prix followed the same opening act, storyline and ending.

Ananda Mikola went on to sweep the two legs of the circuit's first Philippine stop late Sunday, holding off Australian Christian Jones behind another masterful performance at the wheel.

"I had a good start and just held on (to the finish)," said the 26-year-old, who was cheered by a throng of his countrymen who made the three-hour drive from Manila to the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Mikola won the second race in the same wire-to-wire style as the first, and this prompted the star of the Christian Jones Motorsport to contemplate on putting at least a new engine for the next races slated in China.

"I tried to catch up with him," Jones said. "I should have a new engine. A new car even."

Aboard a Fastron Racing for Threebond car, Mikola blitzed the field in the second race as the hot weather here made the track faster.

He timed 31 minutes and 4.55 seconds for the 15-lap race over the 3.4-km track, shaving more than nine minutes off his time in the morning.

Team Goddard-Minardi Team Asia's Dado Peña and Tyson Sy of Speedtech Asia, the teeners carrying the fight for RP, bombed out of contention early and failed to garner points after finishing fourth and ninth, respectively, in the first race.

Peña crashed out in the first lap, while Sy got tangled up with John O'Hara while trying to make a move and also did not finish.

Both Filipinos escaped unhurt in the two crash.

"I saw big crashes and I was a bit worried about my tires," Mikola added.

John Marcelo of Christian Jones Motorsport, also another Filipino, did not finish the race after crashing into a kink right in the first lap.

Moreno Soeprapto made it a twin kill for Indonesia after a sweep of the Promotion class.

Soeprapto checked in fifth overall and ruled the separate division confined to cars with chassis made in 1999 or earlier.

The event was bankrolled by Addict Mobile, Yokohama, Boysen, Motolite, Dodie Lucas of PLDT MyPad (www.pldtmypad.com), and Lima City Hotel with Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite and Wave 89.9 as media partners.

Ex-caddy puts away Calatagan Am crown

CALATAGAN, Batangas—Joseph Labajo parred the first hole of a three-man playoff Sunday to win the first-ever Calatagan Amateur Open over elder brother Mario and young Matthew Manotoc here.

Joseph, one of seven players in the National Caddies' Open program, shot a final round three-over 75 built around nines of 37-38 for 150, catching Mario (79) at the helm and Manotoc, who shared low honors for the day with a 74.

After a 71 in the opening round Saturday, Mario struggled to find fairways and greens and failed to extend the playoff into a second hole by three-putting from the front edge of the 10th green.

Matthew, who grabbed a share of the lead with a chip for birdie on the 17th and a par on the 18th, blew it all by pushing his tee shot into the trees.

The event drew the finest amateurs in the land and confirmed the worthiness of the NCO program being managed by the Philippine Amateur Golf Development Foundation.

Veteran Abe Rosal shot a 76 and finished solo fourth with a 151, one stroke ahead of amateur ace Juvic Pagunsan who turned in a 74.

Almazora leads winners

UNRANKED Mark Almazora survived Sito Rara, 7-6, 6-7, 7-6, yesterday to lead the first-round winners in the boys' 12-under division of the Toby's Philta Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Other winners were fifth seed Tim Polero over Allaine Pila, 6-1, 6-0, sixth seed Calvin Canlas over Ian Villanueva, 6-0, 6-1, seventh seed Leander Lazaro over Noel Agra, 6-0, 6-1, Kim Polero over Simon Samaniego, 6-2, 6-2, Mark Escares over Prince Salvacion, 6-1, 6-1, Kerwin Tim over John Rebata, 6-2, 6-1, and Theo Talatayod over Ronnel Santiago, 6-3, 6-2. In the girls' 12-under division, Ma. Aura Opulencia downed Nicole Eugenio, 6-2, 6-3, and Maika Tanpoco outclassed Jasmine Tan Ho, 6-2, 6-1, to advance in the second round. First-round winners in the girls' 14-under category were fourth seed Clarice Patrimonio over Rachel Lucero, 6-0, 6-1, fifth seed JV Custodio over Anika Limjuco, 6-3, 6-2, sixth seed Joan Opulencia over Julie Em Botor, 6-1, 6-0, Kariz de Dios over Alyssa Mendoza, 6-1, 6-0, Maika Tanpoco over Kezyl Macias, 6-1, 6-2, Enah Baba over Eranielle Soriano, 6-3, 6-2, and Sallymae Siso over Liz Magaway, 6-3, 6-0.

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Phenomenal Tiger back as the Master

From page A25

lowed with an eight-iron approach into the heart of the green to set up the victory putt.

"I've kind of battled the last couple of years," he added. "I've been working hard on my game and made some changes but I wasn't winning major championships."

Woods, who had led by two strokes with two holes left in regulation play before producing a bogey-bogey finish, reclaimed the world No. 1 ranking from Vijay Singh with his victory.

Woods, after a 71, and DiMarco, after a 68, had finished level at 12-under 276 after 72 holes.

DiMarco struck the flag at the last with a chip from in front of the green for the birdie-three that would have secured him the title.

Woods appeared to have set up his third PGA Tour title of the year in regulation by producing a miracle birdie at the par-three 16th, holing out from 40 yards off the green with a delicate chip that fed back 25 ft down the slope.

Errant tee shots on 17 and 18, however, let DiMarco back in before the dramatic finish.

With the win, Woods drew level on nine grand slams with fellow American Ben Hogan and South Africa's Gary Player in the all-time listings.

US Open champion Retief Goosen, whose 67 was the best score of the final round, tied for third at five-under 283 with Britain's Luke Donald, who eagled 13 and 15 on his way to a 69.

Birdies at the first two holes of the final round had put Woods four shots clear before he slipped back with a three-putt bogey at the par-four fifth.

Although he also birdied the par-four ninth to reach the turn three clear at 13 under, he stumbled again at the par-four 10th after duffing a chip from just off the green.

American Ryder Cup player DiMarco then holed a 35-footer at the par-four 11th to trim Woods's lead to just one.

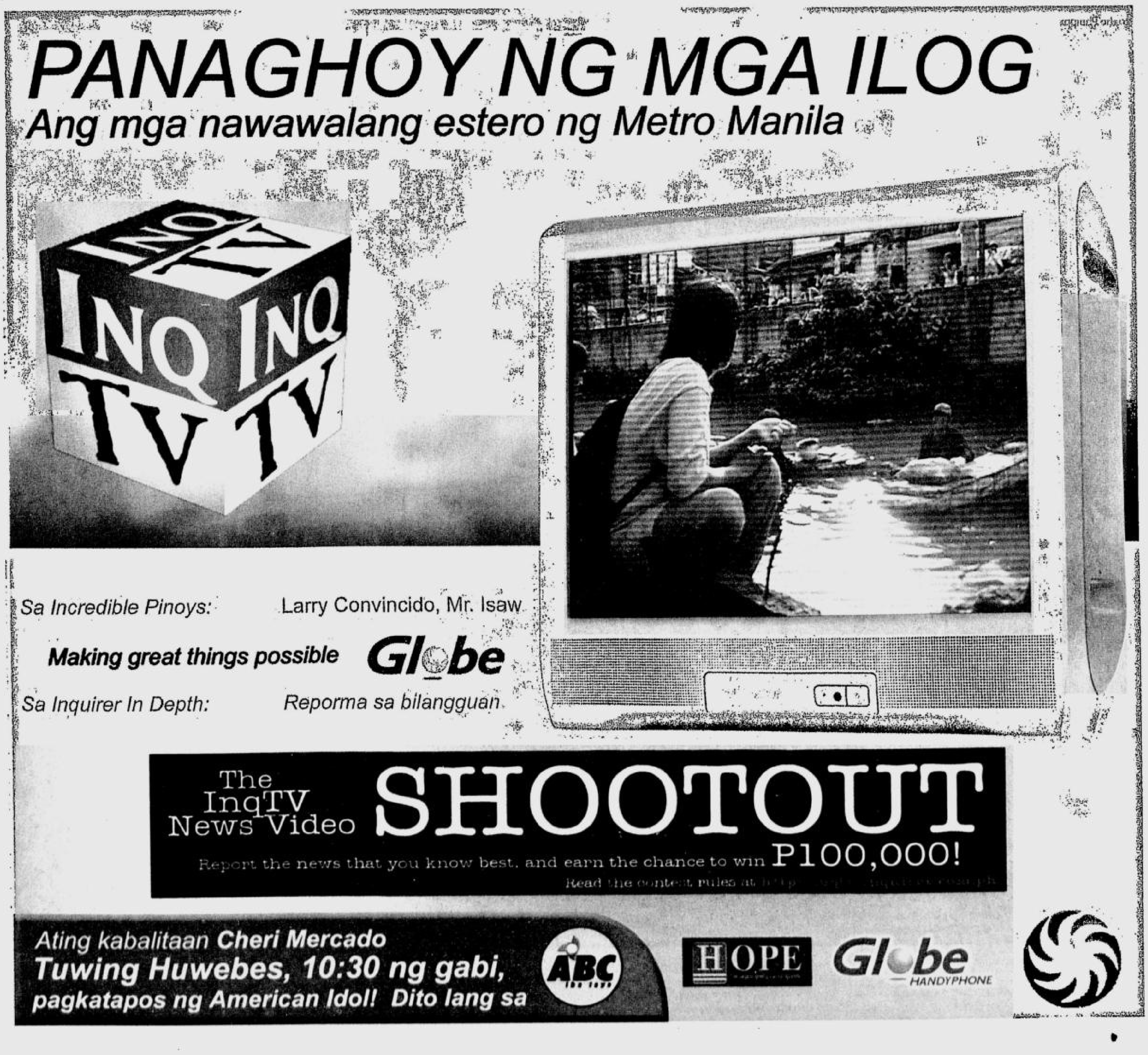
DiMarco lost ground at the very next hole, the par-three 12th, when he was unable to get up and down from the back left fringe to save par. Woods, who parred, was once again two clear.

At the par-four 14th, DiMarco once again cut the lead to one after hitting a superb approach.

Woods knew he had a battle on his hands with DiMarco's approach play in sparkling order.

Although Woods produced his moment of magic at the 16th to forge two strokes clear, DiMarco's rock-steady play set up the gripping finish.

Despite opening with a two-over-par 74 in the thunderstorm-hit first major of the year, Woods swept to the top of the leaderboard with scores of 66 and 65 in the next two rounds. *Reuters*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Pacquiao: I make all the decisions now

By Jasmine W. Payo

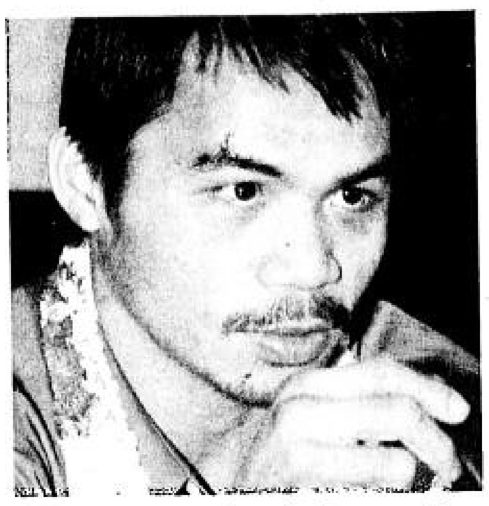
MANNY Pacquiao admits his current financial mess is due to his gullibility but Ring Magazine's world featherweight king believes he still has enough time to set things right.

"*Pirma lang ako ng pirma noon, pero iba na ako ngayon* (I don't sign contracts without knowing the terms now)," said Pacquiao, who will leave for Los Angeles tomorrow to settle, among other things, his tax liabilities in the United States.

"*Lahat ng pinag-uusapan dapat* (all agreements should be in) black and white."

Pacquiao, who hosted a media dinner on Sunday night, is set to file a case against American promoter Murad Muhammad, who took the Filipino's 40-percent share of the pay-per-view revenues of his losing bout against Mexican Erik Morales recently.

He also plans to clarify his financial disagreements—including his local TV rights share from Solar Sports—with long-time manager Rod Nazario, whom he hopes to see in San Francisco.



PACQUIAO: They thought I knew nothing ... I trusted them. RUDY ESPERAS

"They took advantage of me," said Pacquiao in Filipino. "They thought I knew nothing because I didn't complain. I trusted them. When it became a matter of million dollars, people change."

Pacquiao, however, said he doesn't want to further strain his relationship with his former handlers.

"I'm not mad at Nazario or Murad," said the 26-year-old toast of RP boxing. "I just want to know the truth."

Aside from losing his PPV share, Pacquiao, now under new American manager Shelly Finkel, found out several days after the Morales fight that his former handlers had not been paying his taxes since he started fighting in the US four years ago.

Pacquiao said he hopes to boost his cause this time through the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, which requires boxing managers to fully disclose all promotional agreements to their fighters.

The former bakery worker from General Santos City, whose international ring status flourished under Nazario, said his financial woes will soon be over.

"I'm not going to play dumb all my life," he said. "Now I know a lot of things because I've been asking questions:

"I have a lot of advisers and I listen to all of them. But I'm the one who's making all the decisions now, not the people around me."

Payla, Ferrer bow out in King's Cup

DISASTER struck Team Philippines Sunday night when flyweight Violito Payla and light welterweight Florencio Ferrer bowed to superior rivals in the quarterfinals of the 26th King's Cup International Boxing Championships in Bangkok, Thailand.

Payla slugged it out with 2003 World Cup champion Somjit Jongjohor of Thailand but ended up short, absorbing a close 16-22 loss while Ferrer was given a neat lesson by Russian Oleg Issarov who left the ring an RSC-OS (Referee Stopped Contest-Outscored) winner in three rounds.

The twin losses left only the comebacking Harry Tañamor to carry on the fight for the six-man squad. Middleweight Francis Joven lost in the quarterfinals and lightweight Anthony Marcial and bantam Rolando Magbanua in the preliminaries.

Tañamor goes for at least a silver medal on Monday night when he battles Arnon Pangleelad of Thailand in the semifinals.

Payla proved a tough nut to crack as he counterpunched effectively to stay close in the scoring.

On the way to the semifinals, Tañamor ousted So Sok of North Korea via RSC-OS in the preliminaries and then whipped Thai Muanton Budee, 30-15 in the quarterfinals.

BI orders deportation of BAP sec-gen Lim

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE BUREAU of Immigration ordered yesterday the deportation of Graham Chua Lim, ruling that the secretary general of the Basketball Association of the Philippines is a Taiwanese citizen, not a Filipino as he had claimed.

In a six-page decision dated April 7, the BI's board of commissioners also ordered that Lim's name be put on its blacklist and that he be barred from returning to the Philippines.

LIM vows to fight order.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. is set to issue the warrant of deportation soon.

BI executive director Roy Almoro said the five-member board noted that Lim violated the country's immigration laws when he passed himself off as a Filipino citizen.

But Lim said he would fight the BI's decision to boot him out of the country.

Lim said he would appeal the case and that he is confident of proving his true citizenship—as a "true-blooded Filipino."

"I will appeal the decision," said Lim, who maintained he was born and raised in the Philippines. "I just hope that they will consider the fact that I am a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen of the Philippines."

According to the board's decision, Lim's claim that he is a Filipino by birth—because his parents became naturalized Filipinos under the Treaty of Paris—was without merit.

"In fact, respondent failed to present any concrete proof that his supposed ancestors were actual subjects of Spain to qualify for Philippine Citizenship under the Act of Congress of 1902," the decision read.

Also, the board noted, Lim had filed two petitions to acquire Filipino citizenship via naturalization before the Manila Regional Trial Court and the Office of the Solicitor General despite his claim of being a Filipino. The Manila court dismissed Lim's petition on Feb. 9, 1995.

The board also said that Lim is a citizen of the Republic of China (ROC) because he has an ROC passport issued by the Pacific (now Manila) Economic and Cultural Office. It was further stated that Lim is registered with the BI as an alien. His parents, How Ang Lim and Mary Lim Chua, are Chinese, said the BI.

"While he purports himself to be a citizen of the Philippines, documents on record clearly show his Taiwanese citizenship. He cannot even satisfactorily explain his possession of an ROC passport and his registration as an alien in this Bureau," the board said.

Should Lim be deported, he will be brought to the ROC. Hence, the board, said, his lawyer's earlier claim that there's no country to bring him to is also without merit.

The complaint against Lim's citizenship was filed in 2003 by Liberato Valenzuela.

Lim, however, claimed the complaint was the result of a power struggle within the BAP. *With a report from Marc Anthony Reyes*

PBL-recognized ref school sets new course

THE CENTER for Scientific Basketball Officiating (CSBO), a training institution recognized by the Philippine Basketball League, invites teachers, former players and players to join the third batch of its comprehensive training for would-be referees in the PBL and other major leagues. The two-month course will prepare qualified trainees—with or without experience—to make basketball officiating a career. For inquiries, call Lanie Sagayap at 897-6383 or 895-6483.

NCA derby starts today at Big dome

EXPLOSIVE fights resume at the Araneta Coliseum as the premiere National Cockers Association (NCA) presents another 7-cock derby today with 57 matches on tap. Fresh off his second NCA derby victory last week, Vice Gov. Boyet Joson sets out as one of the top favorites in today's 3-cock round. Joson will again field his VGB Excalibur entry using the high-flying dark red Roundheads. Also favored are co-champions Rep. Ronnie Puno (Wild Wing Sundance) and Marcel Julao (MTJ Brothers Firefly). Puno will again field imported fowls, newly arrived from Kentucky, United States, while Julao will rely on his Butcher Hatch crosses. Ready to challenge them are cockfight heavyweights like Jun Santiago, Patrick Antonio, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Yñares, Pol Estrellado, Boy Royo, Rep. Gerry Boy Espina, Rudy Albano among others.

Strong start for U-Ha eleven

U-HA Girls Futbol Club drew with Brent Mamplasan Lions, 2-2, and then shut out European International School, 4-0, in friendly matches recently as it gears up for the 2005 summer season.

The U-Ha-Brent tussle was held Monday at the Brent-Mamplasan pitch while the U-Ha-EIS match was held at the EIS's Parañaque campus.

Goals by Jessica Ryon of Southville IS and Pia Santos of Woodrose School sent U-Ha to a 2-0 lead just 20 minutes into the match.

U-Ha, managed by Ed Formoso, is being backed by Southville International Schools and Colleges of BF Homes Parañaque.

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HONEY MOON TEA (instant tea) is a natural love potion formulated exclusively for men which helps ignite sensuality making every intimate moment feel like a Honeymoon. Its well-blended Chinese herbs are also known to fight fatigue and bring back energy to help release tightness and stress.
AVOID EMBARRASSMENT & FRUSTRATION
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Romance in a cup of tea

A sexual act is an excellent form of exercise. Using almost all of your muscles, it burns up to 300 calories an hour which is almost equivalent to 15 minutes of walking in the treadmill. Studies also show that engaging in a loving, intimate relationship through rewarding and regular intercourse improves the well-being of a person. It makes one feel younger, less irritable and happy because of the endorphins and oxytocin released during the blissful activity of making love. These naturally occurring chemicals serve as natural opiates that act as pain and anxiety killers.

But as men age, their sexual capacity is lessened. Add to that the stress they get from their surroundings and their relationships will be doomed. They will often feel tired. Ergo, they will have less urge to engage in intimate moments with their partners. But then again, science understands the needs of men. From the makers of the well-established slimming tea for women Kankunis comes yet another breakthrough product. **Honey Moon Tea, Love Potion for Men** is the answer to men's sexual drive problems. Made from natural ingredients carefully researched to solve erectile dysfunctions, increase sexual desire and prolong orgasms-this tea does not need any prescription at all.

Honey Moon Tea is a concoction of traditional Chinese herbs *Herba Epimedu*, *Herba Cynomoru*, *Woodwardia Japonica*, *Fructus Polygalea*, *Yang Gong Cao*, *Radix Polygalea*, *Semen Astragali Complanati*, *Radix Ginseng and Pilose Antler*. The potion promotes endocrine regulation to help lengthen sexual climax by empowering the body's metabolism during intercourse.

Mixed in the right proportion, the herbs are also known to help improve the immune system of the body and reinforce the functions of the liver and the kidney. The herbs also have curative benefits and help rid off free-radicals in the body. *Herba Epimedu*, *Herba Cynomoru* and *Woodwardia Japonica* also contain saponins and glycosides which are known as body-building agents that strengthen the bones and the muscles. *Radix Polygalea* invigorates the kidney and the spleen. *Semen Astragali Complanati* improves the eyesight. *Fructus Polygalea* and *Yang Gong Cao* are known as anti-inflammatory agents for pharyngitis. These are also used traditionally as sedative, expectorant, and resuscitating agent. The famous *Radix Ginseng* which is considered a male aphrodisiac is a tonic herb that athletes use to combat stress. The *Pilose Antler* contains sex hormones, estrone and estranediol which helps the sexual glands to secrete more for longer erection of the male genitalia.

Advisable for men from their 30s and up, **Honey Moon Tea** is also for dynamic men who want to intensify their sexual activities through improved sexual drive and for men who need extra stamina for prolonged physical activities like sports. It is to be consumed at least 10-15 minutes before the sexual activity. It is available in tin boxes with 30 sachets each. Modestly priced at ₱2,100 per box, it is a better alternative than resorting to costly chemically-produced medicines which have harmful side effects for the body.

Honey Moon Tea, Love Potion for Men is exclusively distributed by **REJ Diamond Pharmaceuticals, Inc.** and is now available in all leading drugstores and supermarkets

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A little magic, lots of hard work for 4th green jacket

By Doug Ferguson

AUGUSTA, Ga.—The ball scooted up the slope and crawled down toward the hole. There, for two agonizing seconds, it hung on the edge before disappearing into the cup.

A shot for the ages, sheer magic from Tiger Woods' glorious past in the Masters.

Just as stunning as that chip was the mess that followed—shots into the trees and the sand, a rare collapse by the greatest closer in golf on the verge of blowing a final-round lead in a major for the first time.

The one thing that looked familiar, finally, was Woods wearing a green jacket.

But he kept a breathless gallery guessing to the very end, when he delivered his best two shots under stifling pressure and made a 15-foot birdie putt to beat Chris DiMarco in a playoff to win his fourth Masters.

None of it would have been possible, though, without the teasing show-stopper at the par-3 16th that froze oh so briefly and became part of Masters lore the instant it fell.

Woods still had some work to do, however. The chip-in gave him a two-shot lead with two holes to play and it almost wasn't enough.

He sliced his tee shot on No. 17 into the pines, couldn't reach the green and escaped with bogey when his pitch rolled off the green. He sailed his approach on the 18th into the bunker on the right and made another bogey.

13th playoff

That forced the 13th playoff in Masters history, and the second in three years.

The day started on dew-covered fairways in the morning when Woods rattled off seven straight birdies to tie the Masters record. It ended in fading sunlight when Woods hit a perfect tee shot in the playoff and an 8-iron that covered the flag. His winning putt slid into the corner of the cup and sent Woods to his ninth major championship at age 29.

DiMarco gave him the fight of his career, chipping away at a three-shot deficit with a 35-foot birdie on the 11th and applying the pressure with steely nerves.

Woods knew it was over when the ball was a foot from the hole, taking two steps to the left as a smile creased his face and his right fist punched the air with fury.

DiMarco, whose birdie chip in regulation caught the right edge of the cup, again came up short of the green in the playoff and chipped close for a tap-in par. He took his hat off and ran his hand through his hair, crouched and kept looking up at Woods and down at his feet, afraid to watch, perhaps knowing what was about to happen.

When the putt fell, DiMarco walked slowly toward Woods and congratulated him.

Woods closed with a 1-under 71 and won for the second time in a playoff at a major, wrapping up a long and bizarre week at Augusta National. It started with rain delays, and an eagle putt that Woods rolled all the way into Rae's Creek. It ended only after Woods and DiMarco wound up playing 28 holes, and gave the gallery a Masters it won't soon forget.

For Woods, the only thing missing was his father waiting for him on the 18th green to celebrate. Earl Woods' health has been bad all year, and he never left his hotel room. Woods broke down while dedicating the victory to him.

Three Masters

Woods never needed so many heroics to win his previous three Masters.

DiMarco was responsible for that.

Woods emerged from this battle with his ninth major, tied with Ben Hogan and Gary Player, halfway home to the standard set by Jack Nicklaus. He joined Nicklaus (six) and Arnold Palmer (four) as the only players with at least four Masters titles.

Still, this didn't look like the same player who won his first eight majors.

At times Woods was simply brilliant, especially when it took him only five shots over two holes in 22 minutes to make up a four-shot deficit when the third round resumed. He tied a Masters record with seven straight birdies on his way to a 65, giving him a three-shot lead going into the final round.

But he made the kind of mistakes rarely seen from Woods in the final round of a major—a three-putt on the fifth hole from about 25 feet, a poor bunker shot on the 13th.

Ultimately, all that mattered to Woods was having Mickelson, the defending champion, slip the green jacket over his shoulders in the Butler Cabin, and being a major champion again after nearly three years.

He last won at the 2002 US Open, and the 10 majors that have come and gone matched his longest drought. This one returned him to No. 1 in the world ranking, again replacing Vijay Singh at the top.

DiMarco won over the crowd with his fist pumps and resiliency. After finishing the rain-delayed third round with a back-nine, 5-over-par 41, DiMarco outplayed Woods in the final round and could have won except for missing four birdie putts inside 8 feet.

And the chip.

Woods was clinging to a one-shot lead and on the ropes, sailing his tee shot long over the 16th green with DiMarco facing a 15-footer for birdie. Woods played his chip up the slope and watched it trickle down, begging from his knees for it to keep going. When it stopped, then dropped, it looked as though Woods had the Masters won.

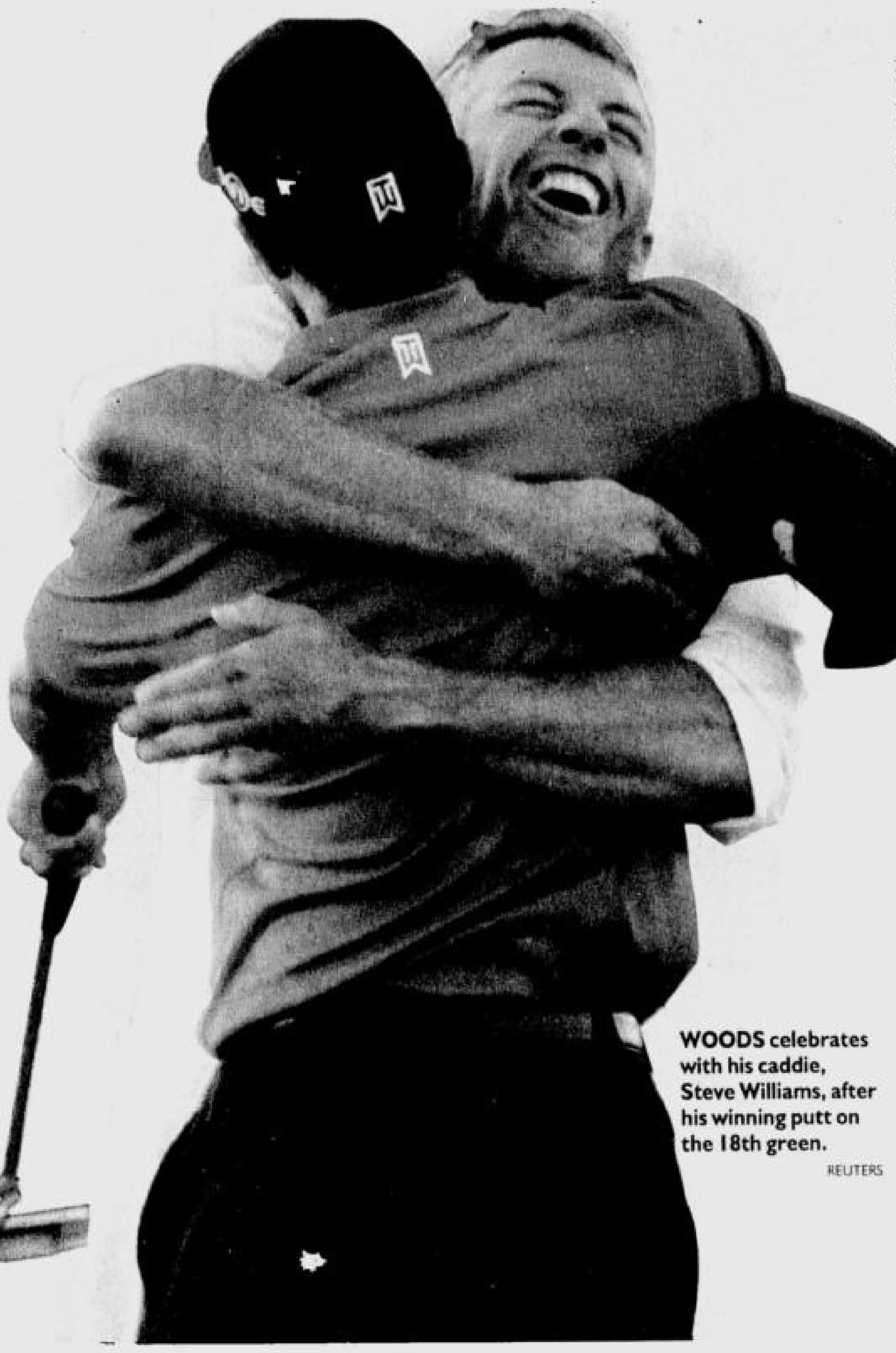
But Woods had to come up big one more time in the playoff, the 13th in Masters history, and the second one in three years.

US Open champion Retief Goosen closed with a 67 and tied for third with Luke Donald of England, who shot 69. They finished seven shots behind the leaders.

Mickelson and Singh played in the final round and barely spoke, having argued over spike marks earlier in the week. Singh got the last laugh with a birdie on the 18th for a 72, finishing one shot ahead of Lefty. In the end, they shook hands and walked off the green smiling.

But that was just the undercard.

From a staggering rally by Woods in the morning to a shocking collapse at the end, Augusta National lived up to its reputation as the most dramatic stage in golf. *AP*



WOODS celebrates with his caddie, Steve Williams, after his winning putt on the 18th green. REUTERS

AN EMOTION-FILLED mom

MASTERS

NOT SO EASY: THE ONLY place Ernie Els was lurking Sunday was at the back of the pack.

A favorite when the Masters began, Els instead had one of his worst showings at Augusta National. He shot a 10-over 298 and finished 47th out of 50 golfers. He didn't break par in any of his rounds.

"It wasn't good, was it?" the Big Easy said. "It just wasn't good. My game wasn't there and that's that. We'll move on."

Though Els had the flu after The Players Championship, he refused to blame illness.

Then the tournament started. Every day seemed to bring a new problem with his game. One day it was putting. Another day it was driving. And yet another day it was his iron game.

But Els doesn't usually have those kind of weeks. Not at the Masters. Though he's still looking for his first green jacket, the three-time major champion always seems to be in contention. He had finished out of the top 20 only once in the previous nine years and was sixth or better the last five years.

He was runner-up twice

Schuma
world's

NEW YORK—Formula O
Michael Schumacher, NBA
Bron James and sailor Ell
are among five sportspeopl
in Time Magazine's list of th
most influential people.

The eclectic list, which hi
on Monday, ranges from th
to the inventors of the Bl
from terrorist leader Abu M
qawi to Nobel laureate Nels

Joining Schumacher,
MacArthur from the world
Chelsea soccer team o
Abramovich, and World
Agency chief Richard Pound

Hailing from 31 differe
and including rappers
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the listed newsmakers hav
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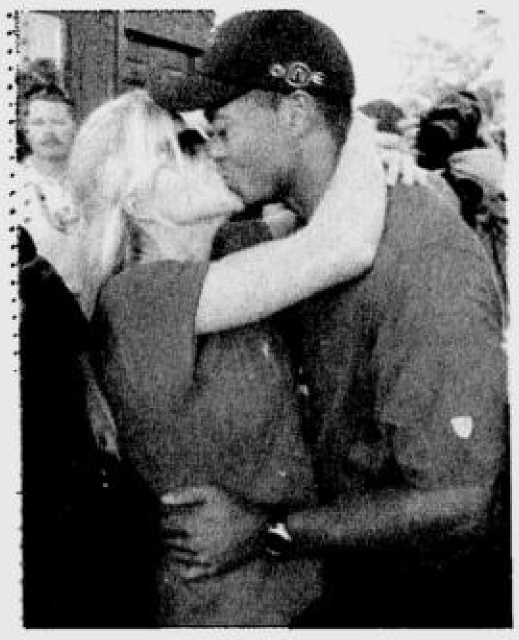
DiMarco: Again a major shortfall



TIGER gets a kiss from wife Elin Nordegren. AP

AUGUSTA, Georgia—Surely one of these days Chris DiMarco will be leading a major when it counts.

But give him his due this time: He stared down Tiger Woods in one of the greatest duels in Masters history.

Matching Woods almost shot for shot in an epic showdown, DiMarco overcame a two-stroke deficit in the final two holes Sunday, nearly holing out a chip at No. 18 that would have claimed his first major championship.

In the end, it wasn't quite enough. DiMarco forced a playoff but could only make par on the first extra hole. Then he could only watch as Woods rolled in a 15-foot birdie to win his fourth Masters and ninth major overall.

DiMarco keeps contending in the biggest tournaments—especially at Augusta. He's led at the end of a round five times in five years, including both the 18- and 36-hole marks of this one.

For the second year in a row, he played in the final group at the Masters. For the second straight major, he was involved in a playoff.

"This was a good gut check for me," DiMarco said. "I felt like I proved a lot to myself."

DIMARCO REUTERS

Last August, DiMarco was matched against Justin Leonard and Vijay Singh in a three-hole playoff at the PGA Championship at Whistling Straits.

Singh birdied the first extra hole and parred the ne xt two for the victory. DiMarco had to be content with a closing 71, the lone player in the last nine groups to break par.

DiMarco put up an even lower score Sunday, finishing with a 4-under-par 68 that had him pumping his fist, dropping to his knees and thoroughly enjoying the moment.

This was just the sort of chance that someone with DiMarco's combative, gritty, emotional personality lives for.

One hole against the greatest player of the generation.

DiMarco is the first golfer to lose a playoff in consecutive majors since Tom Watson at the 1978 PGA and '79 Masters. In fact, DiMarco is the first since then even to make back-to-back playoffs. *AP*

Never-ending Espinosa saga

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

HERE is a story about Luisito Espinosa that should melt even the hardest heart in the world. Written by Cicero A. Estrella of the San Francisco Chronicle, the article was sent to me by Noel Rivera, Hermie's super intelligent son based in San Francisco, California.

***

No more hangers-on

(Part 1 of 2 parts)

THE DOOR of the white minivan slid open and four pint-size preschoolers scattered onto the asphalt parking lot ahead of Luisito Espinosa.

Don't get the wrong idea, though. Espinosa is not a soccer dad. The Pacifica resident is a boxer, and he and his management team were not driving their kids to practice, but toting them along so that Espinosa might squeeze in an early afternoon workout at a Daly City gym.

Such is life for Espinosa, a two-time world champion. There are no more hangers-on, no fancy modes of transport, no big-money contracts. Heck, there is not even a baby-sitter, so his 2-year-old daughter, Janica, as well as the son and two nephews of his manager, occasionally accompany Espinosa to the gym.

The nontraditional boxing entourage suits Espinosa. He has twice reached the summit of his sport, but life is fine the way it is now as he starts from scratch at the age of 34 to rebuild his name and reputation within the what-have-you-done-lately boxing community.

The source of inspiration for Espinosa's comeback is family. Not only his immediate family, but also the extended members, his management team, with whom he was recently reunited.

Back in the fold as adviser is Hermie Rivera, the man who discovered Espinosa in the Philippines and served as his first manager. Noel Rivera, Hermie's son, has taken over as manager.

Hermie Rivera first brought Espinosa to the United States from Manila in 1986. He became close friends with Rivera's sons, Noel, Andy and J.J.

"I'm happy because of my team," Espinosa said through a translator in his native language, Tagalog. "I don't worry about the people around me. If there was one person I didn't get along with with former management teams, I got lazy. But now we're complete."

Something certainly was missing from Espinosa during his last four bouts, three of which ended in defeat. He did not resemble the same fighter who had held the World Boxing Association bantamweight title 1989-91 and the World Boxing Council's featherweight belt 1995-98.

The last defeat, in January 2001, was a fourth-round technical knockout at the hands of Augie Sanchez and left the boxer contemplating retirement with a 45-10-0 record. But then came a phone call from an old friend, Noel Rivera, and Espinosa found renewed fervor for the sweet science.

Espinosa wakes up at 5 a.m. on weekdays to do his roadwork at a track near the one-bedroom apartment where he, his wife and two kids live in. He then drives his son, John Luis, 10, to school and his wife, Mariecherie, to her job at a Redwood City computer company.

Then it is back to the apartment, with Janica always in tow, to cook and tidy up a bit before his late-morning training sessions. He makes sure to finish in time to pick up his son and wife.

This was not the routine that Espinosa had grown accustomed to as a champion. Living mostly in the Philippines, where maids are common, he had gotten used to everything being done for him and his family. Being pampered came with being world champion.

But Espinosa insists he does not miss those days. He enjoys driving his family around. He prefers doing the household chores himself. He likes picking up extra money as a weekend bartender at a Daly City restaurant where he is easily recognized by the mostly Filipino clientele.

"It's not like when we lived in Manila, where anything I wanted was given to me," Espinosa said. "I'm the one who has to do things here, but I like that. If I want to wash clothes, I'll wash my family's clothes. I'm OK with that, because we're learning."

Perhaps this way of life agrees with Espinosa because it is similar to his humble beginnings. Espinosa is one of 14 children and was taught to box at an early age by his father, Dio Espinosa.

One of his first training methods was pounding his bare fists into wooden posts padded only with the soles of rubber flip-flops. *(Concluding part on Thursday, April 14.)*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ent for the new Masters champ

NOTEBOOK

in that span, by a shot to Phil Mickelson last year after missing birdie putts on the final two holes and by three shots to Vijay Singh in 2000.

IMMELMAN'S HOLE-IN-ONE:

When Trevor Immelman's caddie tells him to change clubs, he's not about to argue.

The South African aced the par-3 16th hole Sunday after switching clubs at caddie Neil Wallace's suggestion. Immelman wanted to hit an 8-iron, but Wallace told him to go with a 7-iron.

The ball hit the right side of the green and rolled into the cup for a hole in one. Immelman screamed and jumped in the air when he saw the ball drop, then swung his right fist in a roundhouse punch.

It was the second ace of his career, and he has Wallace to thank for the other one, too. When he made one at the Dutch Open in 2003, he switched clubs at Wallace's suggestion.

The ace wasn't Immelman's only highlight. He finished in a tie for fifth at 4-under 284, his best showing in three trips to the Masters. *AP*

Pistons cool Shaq-less Heat

Game away from Central title

TORONTO—Richard Hamilton scored 17 points as the Detroit Pistons took advantage of the absence of Shaquille O'Neal to defeat the Miami Heat, 80-72, on Sunday and move within a game of clinching the Central Division title.

The Pistons dominated early in Miami and then withstood a determined Heat comeback in the fourth quarter to win their sixth straight game and beat their hosts for the second time in three meetings this season.

O'Neal missed his third straight game with a stomach virus and it hurt Miami, who posted season-scoring lows for a quarter, half and game while shooting just 34.6 percent, another season low.

The Heat have lost two straight games, only the fourth time all season that has happened to the Eastern Conference leaders.

Tayshaun Prince added 16 points for the Pistons, who led by as many as 20 points in the third quarter. Ben Wallace had 12 points and 14 rebounds.

Eddie Jones scored 19 points and Udonis Haslem had 13 points and 11 rebounds to lead Miami, but Dwyane Wade had just five points before fouling out in the fourth quarter.

Alonzo Mourning made his first start for Miami in three years after a kidney transplant and had 10 points, 14 rebounds and five blocked shots.

In Sacramento, Kenny Thomas put in a career high 32 points and added 14 rebounds to help the Kings to a 124-105 win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Mike Bibby scored 24 points and Darius Songaila contributed 10 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings.

Kobe Bryant led the Lakers with 18 points.

In Indianapolis, Michael Sweetney picked up a rebound and scored a lay-up at the buzzer to lift the New York Knicks to a 113-112 overtime win over the Pacers.

Sweetney finished with 20 points and nine rebounds and Jamal Crawford had a team-high 32 points in the win.

Reggie Miller led the Pacers with 34 points while Dale Davis had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

In New Orleans, Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 25 points and hauled in 10 rebounds to help the Portland Trail Blazers to a 90-81 win over the Hornets.

Damon Stoudamire scored 19 points and Ruben Patterson added 16 for the Trail Blazers, who snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Lee Nailon scored 20 points for the Hornets, who dropped their third straight loss.

In Memphis, Shane Battier had 25 points and 11 rebounds as the Grizzlies beat the Charlotte Bobcats 102-95.

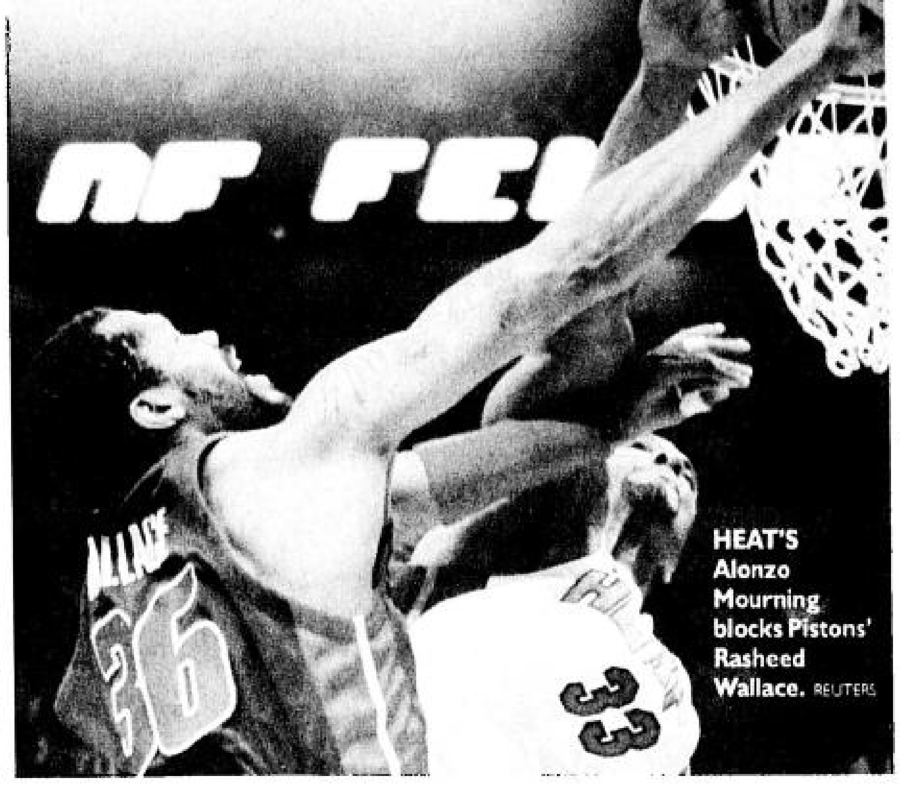
Mike Miller added 21 points for the Grizzlies, winners of five of their last six games.

Brevin Knight had 22 points and 10 rebounds and Emeka Okafor added 19 points and 18 rebounds for the Bobcats.

In Oakland, Tony Parker had 35 points with 12 assists and sank the winning basket with two seconds remaining as the San Antonio Spurs edged the Golden State Warriors 136-134 in double overtime.

Nazr Mohammed had 19 points and 15 rebounds for the Spurs.

Baron Davis led Golden State with 38 points and nine assists. *Reuters*



HEAT'S Alonzo Mourning blocks Pistons' Rasheed Wallace. REUTERS

Spurs to miss ace center

OAKLAND, California—The San Antonio Spurs, already without superstar forward Tim Duncan, will be missing another member of their starting frontcourt for the rest of the National Basketball Association regular season.

The Spurs placed center Rasho Nesterovic on the injured list on Sunday with a sprained left ankle.

Nesterovic suffered the injury in the fourth quarter of Saturday's double-overtime road victory over the Los Angeles Clippers and was replaced by Tony Massenburg. Nesterovic is averaging 5.9 points, 6.6 rebounds and 1.7 blocks in 70 games this season. *AFP*

PCU Dolphins recruit Baculi as new mentor

PHILIPPINE Christian University is out to prove the Dolphins can win a second straight NCAA title despite signing up Junel Baculi as new coach less than three months before the 81st season kicks off.

"I'm still in the process of evaluating the team but I've seen the players' capabilities," said Baculi at a press conference yesterday at the PCU Gym. "It's difficult to follow last year's achievement, but if we all work together I think we can make history by winning back-to-back championships."

Baculi replaced coach Ato Tolentino, who impressively turned the Dolphins from cellar dwellers to champions in just one year.

Tolentino resigned last month to concentrate on his coaching chores with defending champion University of Manila in the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (NAASCU) and the Rizal Technological University in the National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA).

BACULI

"He was committed to coaching other teams," said PCU president Oscar Suarez. "We cannot hold on to a coach forever so we had to release him. But we thank him for giving PCU its first championship in eight years."

Baculi won seven championships in the PBL—four for Welcoat Paints, two for Hapee Toothpaste and one for Dazz Dishwashing.

Jasmine W. Payo

acher, James make Time's 100 most influential people

e champion All-Star Le- n MacArthur who appear e world's 100

s newsstands Dalai Lama ckberry, and lusab al-Zar- n Mandela. James and f sports were ner Roman Anti-Doping

nt countries, designers, mi survivor, e shaped the rding to the magazine's editors.

"It really shows the breadth of human endeavor," Time's managing editor Jim Kelly said. "Influence can be defined in a myriad of ways."

Those named were profiled by people who have themselves been in the spotlight.

NBA Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban wrote "Roman Abramovich went from orphan to oligarch ... So here's my advice to a fellow sports-franchise owner: Ignore the press. Follow your heart."

NBA Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson said James "appears levelheaded and graceful in dealing with his notoriety, his good fortune and the high expectations."

Adventurist Steve Fossett called MacArthur an inspiration after setting the solo around-the-world record, while Pink Floyd Drummer said "watching Schumacher compete is a chance to see the most complete driver in the world give a master class in motor racing." *AP*

SCHUMACHER in one of his triumphs AP

Davenport bags second straight singles crown

LIA ISLAND, Florida— ld number one Lindsay Dav- rt defeated Italy's Silvia Fari- lia, 7-5, 7-5, Sunday to win second straight title in the 5,000 (454,000 euros) WTA nament here.

lso the champion in 1997, enport joined Martina ratilova, Chris Evert, Steffi and Gabriela Sabatini as only three-time winners of lay court event.

he top-seeded American, ng in her fifth final of the captured her second title of 5 after a triumph in Dubai month.

his is a huge win," Daven- said. "Whenever I can win lay against a really tough op- ent, it gives me a lot of ex- ment." Davenport won the three games of the match, breaking Farina-Elia twice in the process. But she said her veteran opponent made things difficult.

"I really felt I was being forced into all sorts of errors," Davenport said. "She would get balls back, and then she would play really well on the offensive. She was mixing it up well with hard shots and drop shots and angles. I felt like she was the reason I didn't play my best."

Farina-Elia, who was playing in her 13th final, remains in search of her fourth career crown to go with three straight titles at Strasbourg from 2001-03.

"I really fought hard today," the 32-year-old said. "I think I played my best game. I did what I could today, but Lindsay came up with unbelievable points at very important moments. Every time I had break points, she came up with an ace."

Davenport claimed the 47th title of her career, and the $93,000 first prize made her the first player to top the one million-dollar mark in prize money in 2005. *AFP*

DAVENPORT shows crack form.

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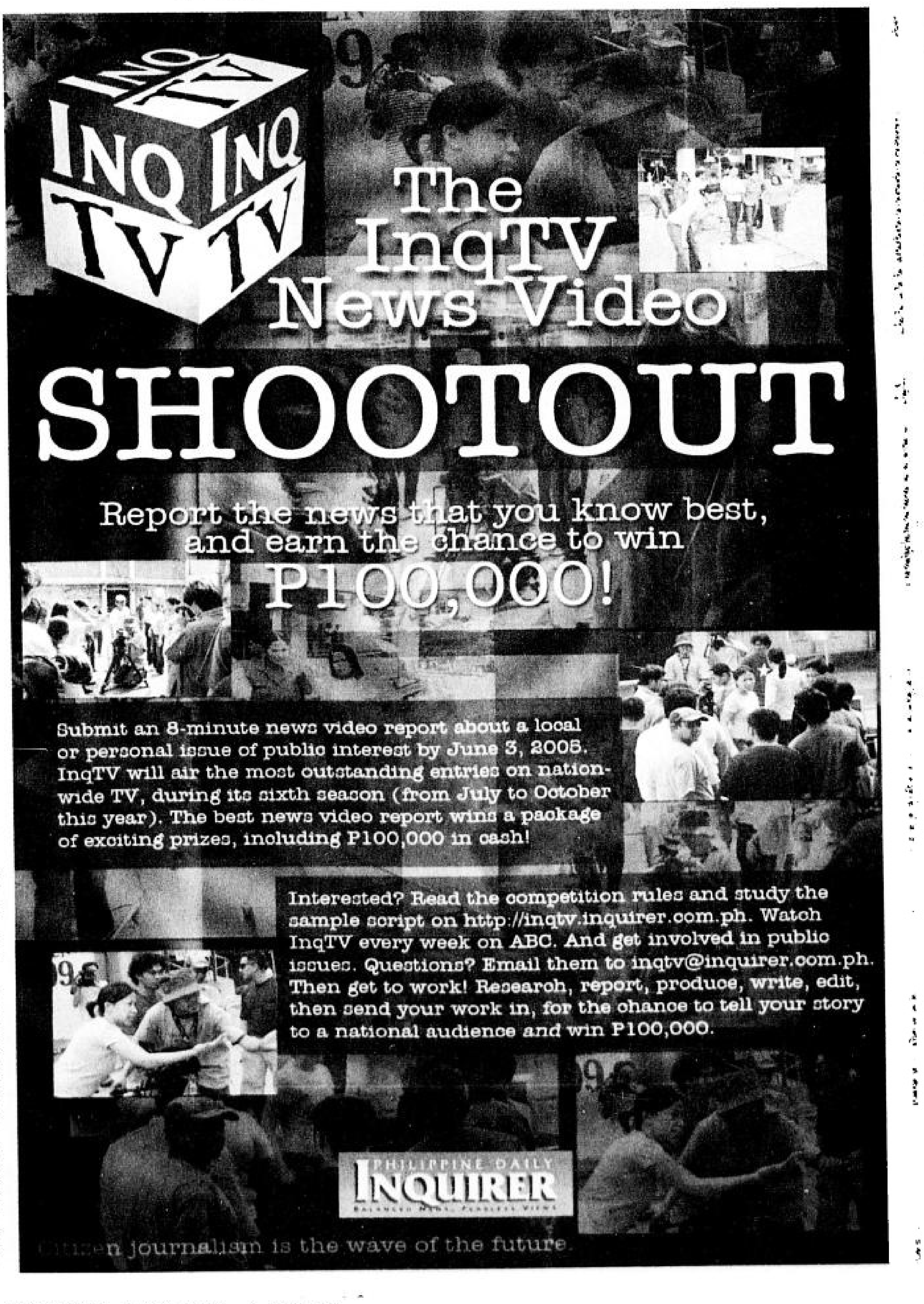

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Jewels face tough test vs Wizards

STANDINGS	W	L
Montaña	2	0
Welcoat	2	0
Magnolia	1	1
Harbour Centre	1	1
Toyota Otis	1	1
Granny Goose	1	1
Nenaco	0	2
Bacchus	0	2

GAMES TODAY (*FEU Gym*)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Magnolia

THE MONTAÑA Jewels tackle their first tough assignment today in their bid to grab the solo lead in the PBL Unity Cup.

After breezing past two young and untested teams, the Jewels are in for a hard grind against the defending champion Magnolia Ice Cream Wizards at 4 p.m. at the FEU Gym.

"Our game against Magnolia will somehow gauge our strength this early, and when we see some flaws, we hope to correct them immediately," said coach Robert Sison of the Jewels, who are shooting for their third straight win.

"Magnolia is a strong team so we have to raise our game a notch higher to keep our streak going."

Harbour Centre will also try to keep its winning run against Toyota Otis-Letran at 2 p.m.

"Everybody is expecting us to do well and we're up to the challenge," said coach Tonichi Yturri after the Portmasters notched a 69-65 triumph over Granny Goose. "So we just have to prepare well and not take any team lightly."

Player of the Week Mac Cardona shot 33 points and 10 rebounds, five days after scoring 26 points in the Portmasters' 81-75 overtime loss against Montaña.

Coach Koy Banal noted that the Ice Cream Wizards "energy and enthusiasm" are back after cruising to an 83-52 win over Nenaco-San Beda, but he remained cautious against the Jewels.

"It won't be easy for us," said Banal whose Wizards have a 1-1 slate like Harbour Centre, Toyota Otis and Granny Goose. "We have to look for some ways to get an edge over the Jewels."

Montaña shares top spot with Welcoat Paints following wins over Harbour Centre and young team Bacchus Energy Drink. *Jasmine W. Payo*

CARDONA: Week's best

Jets shame RP dribblers

Actor Yllana's five exposes SEAG-bound Nationals' suspect form

A TEAM with actors Richard Gomez and Antonio Aquitania on its roster scored a stunning achievement in its first tournament Sunday by putting RP-Cebuana Lhuillier to shame, 63-56, and capturing the Spring Cooking Oil-NBC final North pre-season basketball title at the Rizal Coliseum.

The Parañaque Jets of Vice Mayor and actor/TV host Anjo Yllana stunned the Jean Henri Lhuillier-backed Nationals by limiting them to one basket in the final five minutes 10 seconds.

The Jets' victory avenged an 88-114 rout they suffered in their first meeting with the Southeast Asian Games-bound RP squad in the elimination round.

"It was a hard-earned win," said Parañaque coach Jun da Jose. "The boys played an inspired game, marked by a tight (zone) defense."

Two players—Jets' Randy Lopez and RP-Cebuana's Mel Latoreno—and national coach Boysie Zamar were ejected in the low-scoring, highly physical match.

Another newcomer, Far Eastern Insurance-backed Cavite, repeated over Mayor Freddie Tinga's Forward Taguig, 77-74, in the opener to land third in the five-team, BAP-sanctioned series.

Parañaque's Nino Marquez was named most valuable player. He also made it to the Mythical Five together with Ricky Ricafuente, RP's Nino Canaleta and Don Rez Villamin and Cavite's McDonald Santos.

PARAÑAQUE Vice Mayor and actor Anjo Yllana (13th from left, standing) holds the NBC trophy with other Jets officials.

Da Jose thanked Yllana and the Parañaque council members for their tremendous support in every game.

The Nationals, who had an average 19.5 winning margin over their rivals in the eliminations, trailed 9-17 and 34-35 after two quarters. They led 45-43 going into the fourth and tied the game for the last time at 53 on Jeff Bombeo's jumper with 5:10 left.

But Marquez, Alex Bognot and Mark Saquilayan combined in a 10-3 windup to power the Jets to victory over the Nationals, whose defeat is expected to send shivers in the spines of officials preparing the team for the country's title-retention bid in the SEAG here in November.

The scores:

First Game

CAVITE 77—Lapera 20, Attunaga 14, Nunez 10, Santos 8, Santiago 8, Mopera 7, Panares 6, Valdez 3, Finuliar 1, Piodo 0, Bonus 0, Bollas 0, Sangco 0, Aransazo 0, Bernal 0

TAGUIG 74—Robillos 18, Gonzales 11, Reguera 10, Zablan 9, Marucot 6, Lustestica 5, Aclon 4, Lapinid 0, Ricafuente 0, Vilar 0, Reyes 0, De Castro 0

Quarters: 19-17, 32-37, 56-58, 77-74

Second Game

PARAÑAQUE 63—Basilides 12, Saquilayan 11, Bognot 10, Marquez 6, Araman 6, Guiyab 4, Yambao 3, Lopez 3, Sese 2, Alminario 2, Ruiz 2, Tolentino 2, Rodriguez 0, Aquitania 0

RP-CEBUANA 56—Canaleta 12, Bombeo 11, Villamin 9, Dela Rosa 8, Eman 6, Moore 6, Reyes 3, Ferrer 2, Luanzon 0, Latoreno 0

Quarters: 17-9, 35-34, 43-45, 63-56

Big turnout seen in 4th MY Games

THE FOURTH Manila Youth Games (MY Games) has been creating such a stir that a week before its opening this Sunday, the organizing Manila Sports Council (Masco) is already looking forward to a big turnout.

"We expect a big field," said Masco chief Arnold "Ali" Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. "We are excited about this year's MY Games and expect the success of our program."

All 897 barangays in the country's premiere city, as well as the 130 private and public schools will be represented in the week-long event set mostly at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

About 10,000 athletes aged 17 and under will see action in the competition which will kick off with an opening ceremony on April 17 at the Rizal Memorial Track Stadium.

A cheering contest will highlight opening of the event backed by Red Bull, Super Ferry, San Miguel Corp., Globe Telecoms, Milo, IntraSports, Concept Movers, PSC, and PAGCOR.

The 4th MY Games will also serve as a qualifying event for members of Team MayniLA which will compete in the first MY Games National Invitational set Sept. 29-Oct. 2 featuring the best athletes from local government units nationwide.

In line with the city's Buhayin ang Maynila program, Mayor Atienza has ordered the renovation of the city's various sports facilities.

Marikina Brown sews up 4th win

MARIKINA Brown overwhelmed Marikina Yellow, 128-59, last weekend up to move up to solo second in its group in the Global Destiny Basketball League eliminations at the Barangay Barangka gym in Marikina City.

With the victory, the Marikina Brown cagers improved to a 4-1 win-loss slate behind pacesetting Marikina Gray in the grassroots program of the cable network sponsored by Solid Video Corp., Sony Philippines and MyDestiny Cable internet.

In other games, Marikina Orange (3-2) crushed Marikina Light Blue (1-4), 86-72, while Marikina Yellow (1-4) won by default over Marikina Violet (2-3) in the event also backed by Avid Sales Corp., Regent Food and Molten balls.

Mandaluyong Red (4-0) kept its hold of top spot in its group by routing Mandaluyong Yellow (0-5), 81-48, while Mandaluyong Blue (3-) nipped Mandaluyong Gray (2-3), 61-60, at the Mandaluyong Elementary School gym.

San Juan Green (2-3) upset San Juan Light Blue (4-2), 90-78, at the Sta. Lucia covered court.

The matches are aired on Global Kabayan Channel 3 from 12 noon to 2 p.m. daily.

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Posthumous awards for ex-Olympians

ASIDE from representing the country in the Olympic Games, nine Filipinos also sacrificed their lives in defense of the Republic during the last World War.

Two of these Olympians—swimmer Teofilo Yldefonso and trackster Miguel White, both bronze medal winners in separate editions of the Games—will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award during the SCOOP Awards rites on Thursday to mark the 80th anniversary last year of the Philippines' Olympic participation.

The awards rites at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong will be held in connection with the Philippine Olympians Association general assembly and supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, San Miguel Corp., Nestlé, Milo and the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Yldefonso, a member of the Philippine Scouts from Piddig, Ilocos Norte, and the only Filipino to win a pair of Olympic bronze medals (Amsterdam 1928 and Los Angeles 1932), died during the Bataan Death March.

White, who hailed from Legaspi City and winner of a bronze in the men's 400-meter hurdle, also in 1932, was killed in combat.

Other past Olympic campaigners who gave up their lives during the war were basketball players Jacinto "Jumping Jack" Ciria Cruz and Amador Obordo, Lt. Nemesio de Guzman in athletics, Lt. Otoniel Gonzaga in shooting, Lt. Simplicio de Castro in boxing and Lt. Enrique Jurado and Abduraman Ali, both in swimming.

Ciria Cruz and Obordo were teammates in the RP five that finished fifth in 1936 in Berlin. De Guzman was a member of the RP team in the Amsterdam Games in 1928, while Gonzaga and De Castro saw action in Berlin in 1936.

The names of the nine Olympians and 43 other Filipino campaigners who were also war casualties are inscribed in a bronze plaque, unveiled on July 17, 1954 by then PAAF president Jorge Vargas, at the entrance of the Rizal Coliseum on Vito Cruz, Manila.

Also to be given Lifetime Achievement Awards are Olympic silver medalists Anthony Villanueva and Mansueto Velasco in boxing, bronze medalists Simeon Toribio in athletics, Jose "Cely" Villanueva, Leopoldo Serrantes, and Roel Velasco, also in boxing, bowler Arianne Cerdeña and taekwondo jins Stephen Fernandez and Beatriz Lucero.

EPSON CUP 2 BADMINTON

Easy sailing for defenders

NATIONAL champion Poca Alcala launched her title bid on a winning note Sunday in the elimination round of the Epson Cup 2 badminton championship at the Olympic Badminton Club in Libis, Quezon City.

The reigning Palarong Pambansa titleholder combined with actress Ynez Veneracion to subdue the tandem of Sheila Coronel and Kathylyn David, 15-7, 15-4, in ladies' doubles Class C.

Alex Cuevas, the reigning non-ranking men's national champion, paired with Renel Bernaldo to clobber JB Villamidez and Wolf Lambsdorff, 15-7, 15-4, in men's doubles Class A. They were joined in the next round by Jervy Espiritu and Sergie Santos who downed Gener Godoy and Alex Bartolay, 15-12, 15-11.

Elite players Gabby Nepomuceno and Jeff Tablante overcame Jere Frejil and Archie Medina, 17-15, 15-13.

In ladies' Class A, Cathy Escasinas and Kat Kuan downed Melody Villaceran and Jojo Hipolito, 15-10, 15-6, in the event sponsored by Shell, Wilson, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Citibank, Apple Center, Konica, Mizuno and UNO Magazine.

Villaseran-Hipolito was eliminated later in the night, absorbing a 15-0, 15-0 defeat at the hands of Boots Quilala and Eleanor Tesorero.

Class A mixed doubles saw My De Leon and Phillippe Gamboa scraping past Kristine Florendo and Nick Carpio, 15-13, 17-14, while Bryan Bermudez and Jordan Farinas recovered from a sluggish start to beat Don Estuita and Bobin Panganiban, 17-14, 15-2, in men's class B.

Philippine Badminton Association president Amelita "Ming" Ramos and Pasig City representative Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr. delivered Sunday's opening serve of the tournament supported by Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, Yehey.com, PBNet, Fitness First, BHM, Chowking Madison Square and Ridgewood Hotel-Baguio.

WENDY Valdez, extra sweet friend

Is Wendy V Paolo B's 'secret'?

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I HAD the time of my life at Toilet Humor (Malate) with my childhood pal **Lala Aunor,** who owns the place, and my UP comrade **Ambet Nabus.**

Unlike most comedy bars, the in-house comics of Toilet don't come on too strong. Instead of making fun of the guests, the way stand-up comics usually do, they have fun with them. That night the bar hosted a victory party for one of their "talents," **Wendy Valdez,** who won Miss Tourism and first runner-up in Binibining Pilipinas.

Wendy's special guest was **Paolo Bediones.** The TV host took time out from his busy sked to join Wendy's celebration. In fact he was to catch a flight to Davao (for "Extra Challenge") the next morning. But he stayed way past midnight to keep Wendy company. You could not help but notice their extra-sweetness. Smooching... hugging... whispering.

Paolo told me he had promised Wendy weeks ago that he would attend the party, so he made sure to drop by. When Ambet teased him "*Kayo na ba ng alaga ko?*" Paolo flashed an enigmatic smile. Someone close to Wendy whispered to me that she spent Holy Week with Paolo.

When he left, Lala, Ambet and I cornered Wendy who was a bit tipsy then. "Are you in love?", we asked. She was obviously dazed. "*Tropa lang kami ni* Babe."

Babe? We all laughed at that slip. Their body language earlier said otherwise. A few minutes after Paolo was gone, they were already burning the lines. We could not help overhear Wendy. "When are you coming back, babe?" "Are there any sexy stars with you?"

Paolo obviously wants to remain a bachelor at large. But for how long? Can he remain eligible yet elusive? Does his being unattainable make him more desirable? Hmm.... Why doesn't "Extra Challenge" turn the tables on Paolo and invite his type of girls to one of their next episodes ... and see who can win his heart for keeps?

Just asking

Is it true that **Wendell Ramos** is a major headache to the production staff and crew of "Darna"? An insider claims they are just putting up with him out of respect for his manager, **Douglas Quijano,** who has good long-standing business ties with GMA-7. **Angel Locsin** as Darna has earned hero worship; Wendell's alleged attitude problem could give him zero worship?

'Kamao'

After some initial punches of **Raffy Tulfo's** "Kamao" at NBN4 (Sundays 6 p.m.), the hard-hitting broadcast journalist got a lot of positive feedback. **Robin Padilla** and **Manny Pacquiao** have a show with the same name but that doesn't bother Raffy a bit "The recall factor is good for both shows," he says. "Besides why should I change the title? *Nauna naman ako sa kanila.*"

I asked why all the Tulfo brothers seem to be on the warpath most of the time. He clarifies: "We are not war-freaks. We were just taught to fight our own battles and never come home crying."

For bad elements, there's no escaping the long-arm of "Kamao." Raffy makes sure that criminals end up behind bars. This is why even government authorities salute his TV team.

Summer at W. H.

Why simmer in the summer heat? You can instead chill out at my "headquarters," Watering Hole. They have come up with something new for these sizzling months. W. H. is open at 3 p.m. to accommodate early customers from call centers in the Ortigas area. They have also added sumptuous dinner dishes in their already yummy menu for the budget conscious guests. Imagine baked oysters, chicken in a basket etc... for only P100!

For live band entertainment, there are the coolest acoustic groups, such as PS2, 3rd Avenue, Industria, Classified Acoustic and Metafour. And on weekends, this place caters to the younger set. Fridays is reserved for show bands that will surely make you feel it's really a weekend. Students on vacation can listen to pure R&B bands on Saturdays and enjoy the refreshing C2 Green Tea as welcome drink. Best of all, beer is only P20 for early birds, and P25 all night long! No wonder Watering Hole is still going strong on its 10th year.

For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

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'Gift of Praise' album

A NEW praise and worship album, "Gift of Praise" was launched recently by Bishop Teodoro Bacani at the Lay Formation Center, San Carlos Seminary in Guadalupe.

All 12 songs in the album are original compositions of advertising man Ariel Bondoc, musical director of the Salt and Light for Christ Community.

The launch was highlighted by reading of reviews from singer-composer Gary Granada and Fr. Anton Pascual, Radio Veritas general manager.

Gary Granada said: "There should always be a place for music that reminds us of His grace and binds us together in His Love."

Pascual, a staunch promoter of Gospel music in the renewal movement, praised the songs' lyrical content, saying they transcended ecumenical barriers since they had sprung from talents "used to glorify God."

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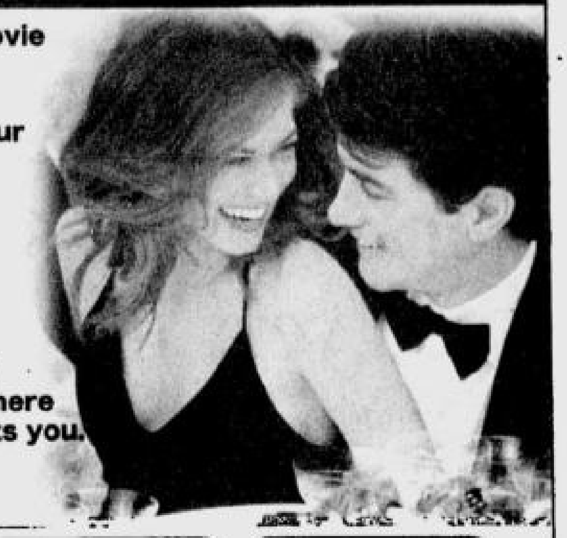

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Are you game?
LOVE ME IF YOU DARE
MTRCB RATING:R 13

GUARANTEED SEATS
the podium cinema
1. THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
12:10 FS / 12:40 MF / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40
8:40 / 10:10 LFS / 10:40 LMF / 12:10 END
2. HIDE AND SEEK
11:25 FS / 11:55 MF / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25
8:35 / 10:15 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:25 END
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sm megamall cinema 1
BE COOL
11:35 FS · 12:00 MF / 2:25 / 4:50
7:15 / 9:15 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 11:40 END
☎ 633-1901
sm cebu cinema 1
ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12:10 MF / 1:34 / 3:48 / 7:36
9:15 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:05 END
☎ (032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 BE COOL
2 SAHARA
3 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 CLOSER
6 GUESS WHO
7 BOOGEYMAN
8 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
9 THE PACIFIER
10 RESERVED
11 RESERVED
12 RESERVED

sm city fairview
1 THE PACIFIER
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 HOSTAGE
4 SAHARA
5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
6 HIDE AND SEEK
7 GUESS WHO
8 ROBOTS
9 CLOSER
10 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
11 BE COOL
12 ALONE IN THE DARK

sm city north edsa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 CLOSER
5 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
6 SAHARA
7 HIDE AND SEEK
8 GUESS WHO

sm city manila
1 CLOSER
2 SAHARA
3 GUESS WHO
4 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
5 THE PACIFIER
6 BE COOL
7 HOSTAGE
8 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
9 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
10 BOOGEY MAN
11 ALONE IN THE DARK
12 HIDE AND SEEK

sm city sta. mesa
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 CLOSER
5 SAHARA
6 GUESS WHO
7 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
8 HIDE AND SEEK
9 THE PACIFIER
10 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

sm city southmall
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE smcinemaexclusive
6 CLOSER
7 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
8 GUESS WHO
9 THE PACIFIER
10 SAHARA

sm city bicutan
1 SAHARA
2 GUESS WHO
3 HIDE AND SEEK
4 CLOSER

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 THE PACIFIER
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 SAHARA
4 CLOSER

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 HOSTAGE
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD
4 HITCH
5 CURSED
6 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

sm city baguio
1 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 RAY
4 HOSTAGE

sm city batangas
1 CONFIDENCE
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 HOSTAGE
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

sm city dasmariñas
1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 CLOSER
3 THE PACIFIER
4 ALONE IN THE DARK

sm city marilao
1 THE PACIFIER
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 ALONE IN THE DARK
4 HOSTAGE

sm city bacoor
1 ALONE IN THE DARK
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 SAHARA
4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 THE PACIFIER
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 CLOSER
8 GUESS WHO

sm city lucena
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 HITCH
3 BUNSHINSABA
4 RACING STRIPES

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 RACING STRIPES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 CONFIDENCE
6 HITCH
7 HOSTAGE
8 SAHARA

sm city iloilo
1 HITCH
2 RESERVED
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5 HOSTAGE
6 THE FINAL CUT
7 RESERVED
8 CURSED

sm city davao
1 SAHARA
2 ROBOTS
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 RAY
5 HITCH
6 THE FINAL CUT

sm city cagayan de oro
1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 HITCH
3 THE FINAL CUT
4 ROBOTS

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ENTERTAINMENT

Nora's lawyers say they will need very little gov't help

By Volt Contreras

SUPERSTAR Nora Aunor's lawyers said on Saturday they would seek intervention from the Philippine government only on matters outside the actress' defense against the drug charges she faces in California.

The Edelberg & Espina law office apparently tried to put to rest speculations that the government has been giving special assistance to the actress (Nora Villamayor off-screen), a celebrity endorser for the President in the 2004 polls.

"We will be contacting the Office of the Philippine Consulate General (in Los Angeles) upon need of any assistance on issues beyond the aspect of Ms Villamayor's defense," the law firm said in an e-mailed statement.

All inquiries regarding Aunor's case should only be directed to the law firm, it added.

Earlier, one of the counsels, Filipino lawyer Claire Espina, denied reports that the government — through the consulate — may have paid for Aunor's $10,000 bail following her arrest at the Los Angeles International Airport on March 30.

The statement said the actress posted bail through the law firm.

Aunor's first hearing is set April 21.

RUDOLPH Valentino and Gloria Swanson in "Rocks"

Valentino's only film with Swanson found

AMSTERDAM—Many pining looks and a story of forbidden love were revealed after more than 75 years Tuesday when a long lost silent film starring Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson was shown in Amsterdam.

The only known copy of the 1922 classic "Beyond the Rocks" with an imaginative and playful new score by Dutch composer Henny Vrienten, premiered in style at the art deco Tuschinski theatre to mark the start of the Filmmuseum's Biennal festival.

Movie critics and historians had been looking for the film directed by Sam Woods (1883-1949)—the only one in which Valentino and Swanson starred together.

Some of the sets seem hilariously fake by today's standards, but the movie shows why its stars were the silent era's royalty.

All known copies were lost in the late 1920s.

In her 1980 autobiography "Swanson on Swanson" the actress: "Does anyone know of a print anywhere of the film Rudy Valentino made with me in 1921?"

In 2000 the first fragments were found in a collection left to the museum by a deceased collector.

"During the next two years we kept finding parts [and] finally in 2003 we found the last missing fragment, the opening credits," Geke Roelink of the Filmmuseum told AFP. *AFP*

Smashing debut: 'CSI New York'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE MUCH-AWAITED new show, "CSI: New York," made a smashing debut at 9 p.m. last Tuesday on AXN, with lead actor **Gary Sinise** and director **Deran Sarafian** pacing the other talents involved in the production with their acutely involved and focused work.

Right off the bat, they set the edgy tone for the pilot episode, with an opening sequence showing a very troubled Sinise praying in church.

He also looked like he hadn't slept in a long time, hounded as he was by some faceless demons who would be exposed only at the end of the episode.

Very quickly, the production showed the discovery of a woman's body, followed in rapid order by a second female corpse. Similar marks on the two bodies indicate that a serial killer is on the loose.

The "experimental" nature of the marks further hints at a demented research scientist at work. But, what could be the purpose of his grisly experiments?

A break in the case presented itself when a photo of the second victim was found, showing some familiar New York landmarks in the background. Using a high-tech form of triangulation, the CSI detectives were able to locate the precise spot in the borough of Queens where the photo had been taken.

A third victim was then found at the location, and the detectives were heartened to see that she was still alive. Unfortunately, she was in a coma, so Sinise couldn't get her to provide leads that could result in the serial killer capture.

But, being the brilliant and sensitive investigator he was, he still managed to get the third victim to help him, by answering his questions with two blinks of her eyes for yes, and one for no.

The episode was full of gripping moments, but this was the most dramatic and moving by far. It was as if the victim was coming back from the "dead" to make sure that her would-be murderer would pay for his crimes.

After a few more twists and turns, the serial killer was finally exposed, and Sinise concluded that he had conducted his vicious "experiments" not because he wanted to make a scientific discovery, but because he needed to gain absolute control over his victims.

Ironically, the episode was weakest after the case was solved, because the explanation and analyses that followed were much less compelling than what had come before. In future episodes, the show would do better if it ended its storytelling right after the discovery of the guilty party.

Despite this anticlimactic conclusion, the pilot episode of "CSI: New York" was a compelling viewing experience, thanks to Sarafian's edgy visualizations and sensitive use of lighting, and Sinise's "tormented" portrayal.

His performance was made even more gripping by the fact that his character was determined not to sleep until he had brought the killer to justice. This made his determination all the more intense, and made viewers empathize with him throughout the episode.

Engelbert Humperdinck

"KING of Romance" Engelbert Humperdinck made generations fall in love with his music. With the release of his "Greatest Love Songs" album, avid fans can relive the romance.

The 24-track compilation includes cuts like "A Man Without Love," "Another Time, Another Place," "Too Beautiful to Last," "Misty Blue," "Can't Take My Eyes Off You," "What a Wonderful World," "Sweetheart," "There's a Kind of Hush," "I'm a Better Man," "I Want to Wake Up with You," and "Free at Last."

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3 (DOLBY) THE PACIFIER GP
4 (DOLBY) SAHARA PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) HIDE AND SEEK PG13

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2 PACIFIER
3 MISS CONGENIALITY 2
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
5 SAHARA (SIMUL US)
6 THE PACIFIER
7 HIDE AND SEEK
8 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
9 CLOSER
10 BE COOL

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CLOSER
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3 (DOLBY) SAHARA
4 (DOLBY) HIDE AND SEEK

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
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1 SAHARA (SIMUL US)
2 PACIFIER
3 CLOSER
4 HIDE AND SEEK

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
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1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
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1 SAHARA (SIMUL US)
2 CLOSER
3 PACIFIER

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(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 ALONE IN THE DARK
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) SAHARA
5 PACIFIER

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2 GAMITAN
3 RENOVATION
4 RENOVATION
5 (DOLBY) SAHARA
6 CLOSER

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(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (DOLBY) LEGENDARY STREET FIGHTER
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Araneta Center CINEMA GUIDE
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MISS CONGENIALITY 2
THE PACIFIER
BOOGEYMAN
SAHARA
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
CLOSER
BE COOL
HITCH

ALI MALL CINEMAS
1 THE PACIFIER
2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2
3 SAHARA
4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

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1 HUNTED OFFICE
2 SEX & ZEN-2
3 BIGLANG LIKO
4 RESERVED

Universal
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Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
2 CURSED
3 CONFIDENE
4 HOSTAGE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 CONFIDENCE
2 HOSTAGE
3 (DOLBY) CURSED
4 (DTS) SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

Cine Nepo
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1 ROBOTS
2 HITCH
3 (DOLBY) MILLION DOLLAR BABYS
4 (DTS) FIVE CHILDREN

Centre Plaza Cinema
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1 ROBOTS
2 HITCH

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 (DTS) BE COOL
3 (DOLBY) SAHARA (SIMUL US)
4 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD
2 (DOLBY) SAHARA (SIMUL US)
3 (DTS) VISIBLE SECRET
4 BE COOL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ROBOTS
2 HITCH
3 (DOLBY) MILLION DOLLAR BABY

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 CURSED
3 (DOLBY) PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 (DTS) HITCH

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 MISS CONGENIALITY
2 ROBOTS
3 (DOLBY) SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) WAR EAGLES
2 HUWAD NA HAYOP
3 TETENG BALIW
4 (DTS) CRACKER JACK

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) SAHARA (SIMUL US)
2 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DTS) BE COOL
4 KAPIT BAHAY
5 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

Mega Center Mall
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1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 WHOLE TEN YARD
3 (DTS) PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 (DOLBY) CURSED

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MISS CONGENIALITY
2 CURSED
3 CONFIDENCE
4 SALAT SA LIGAYA

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 CHAIN OF COMMAND
2 ANG GUSTO KO SA LALAKE

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Araneta Center Leisure Guide

Cineplex Grand Lobby

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MISS CONGENIALITY 2
1:15 / 4:00 / 6:45 / 9:30
THE PACIFIER
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30
BOOGEYMAN
2:15 / 4:30 / 6:45 / 9:00
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
1:10 / 3:10 / 5:10 / 7:10 / 9:10
CLOSER
12:25 / 2:35 / 4:45 / 6:55 / 9:05
BE COOL
1:50 / 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20
SAHARA
1:15 / 4:00 / 6:45 / 9:30

ALI MALL CINEMAS
➊ THE PACIFIER
11:50 / 2:00 / 4:10 / 6:20 / 8:30
➋ MS. CONGENIALITY 2
11:55 / 2:40 / 5:25 / 8:10
➌ SAHARA
12:20 / 3:05 / 5:50 / 8:35
➍ HIDE & SEEK
11:40 / 1:50 / 4:00 / 6:10 / 8:20
➎ SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10 / 8:10
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE Apr. 13
4:45pm Purefoods vs. Sta Lucia / 7:35pm Ginebra vs. Shell
THE CASCADES: LIVE IN MANILA
April 15 Friday, 8pm
RIVERMAYA & KITCHIE NADAL LIVE!
April 16, Saturday, 8pm
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE Apr. 17
4:15pm Alaska vs. Red Bull / 6:35pm Ginebra vs. Talk N Text

CENTER EVENTS
SALE EVENTS — Van Heusen Dress Shirt Sale ongoing until April 17 and Mod Milano Jewelry Sale ongoing until April 15, Ground Floor of Gateway Mall
EXHIBITS — Pope John Paul II Memorial Exhibit ongoing until April 16 at Level 3 of Gateway Mall
SPECIAL PROMOS — Hush Puppies Get Into the Wave Promo ongoing until April 30 at Level 2 of Gateway Mall.

LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

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ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Kristine: Closet makeup artist

DIETHER Ocampo's pretty woman

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

ACTRESS Kristine Hermosa owns almost a hundred pairs of slippers. But the pairs dearest to her are those from boyfriend Diether Ocampo.

"Diet [Diether's nickname] bought me two pairs—one white, another brown—during his recent trip to Australia. They're really special to me. Although I love everything that he gives me," Kristine told INQUIRER Entertainment.

"I like to collect slippers. I don't know anymore how many I own. But now I try to control the urge to buy more," the actress added.

Just late last year, a friend gifted Kristine with 100 pieces of shoe bags. The actress said she ran out of the bags only a few months later.

The Hermosas have just moved into their newly built house in Quezon City. "I'm done fixing my bedroom, but my mom and sisters aren't finished with theirs," she said. "My room has lots of cabinets. The adjoining bathroom is done in red and white. I have a four-poster bed."

It wasn't her dream bedroom, she revealed, laughing, but her mom's. "I wanted my room to be simple, homey and spacious. I want it Japanese-inspired—with low mattresses. I want it carpeted or, maybe, with fur. But I can just make do with what I have. I plan to decorate it with colorful fabrics."

LET ME tell you about cosmetics ...

"NEVER thought I'd wear wristwatches this big."

OUT OF THE CLOSET

SLIPPERS

"The white and brown slippers were from Diet. I like the white pair because I can match it with any outfit. I also have a couple of slippers from Bench. Before I got this one, I didn't know that brown and blue could look good together."

SHOES

"I'm a size 5. I find it difficult to buy the shoes that I like because stores always run out of small sizes. *Maraming maliit ang paa sa Asia.*

"I like wearing rubber shoes. I have them in all colors, designs and textures. I even have a pair in silver. Stilettos I wear only for formal occasions or for work.

"For rubber shoes, it's important that your feet are comfortable. Cushioning is important. I really don't suggest buying expensive brands."

TOPS

"I like the color pink. I like clothes that are simple *pero may dating*. I prefer those that don't look cheap, like this black baby tee from HerBench. I also prefer the classy type, like this spaghetti-strapped pink top, or this white racerback. HerBench provides me with most of my clothes.

"The black top is special because it has a message. 'Love is all we need.' Isn't that true? I've been using this shirt over and over for more than six months now."

UNDERWEAR

"What I really like from HerBench are the panties. There's a new line of floral underwear that really reminds you of summer. I have them and their matching tops. I think they're really made as sleepwear, but I don't wear them to bed. *Sayang naman.* They look far too nice to be used as *pantulog*.

"As sleepwear, I use anything that's plain. I'm way past the

KRISTINE/ A2-3

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

ABANGAN!
May Tama kaya Mas Mali!
ABC

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4.25 PM)	Gatekeepers (5.10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5.35 PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Krystala	Hiram	Spirits	Kamao	TBA	Bora			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	Anime Ring Kasho				Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Tryker Hungry Heart	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Darna		Full House	TBA	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Scare Tactics	The Ring	Cold Cases		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now			
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		The Hope 1-Milion All Filipino					IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
JackTV		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxsteel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		Temptation Island		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Muling Umawit Ang Puso				Magnifico				Hati Tayo Sa Magdamag				Pera O Bayong				Huli Sa Akto	
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Angel			Smallville		News Central	Oprah		The Men's Room
AXN		CSI: Miami		CSI: Miami		Fear Factor (Season V)		7 Days (Season III)		Pensacola (Season III)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		CSI: NY (Season I)		The Amazing Race 7		The Amazing Race 7	
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card		Miss Match		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Interpol Investigates		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation: Deadly Delay/ Amazon Claws		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports				WTA Proximus '05 Diamond: William vs. Mauresmo				Boxing: Barrera vs. Fana						NBA Game Houston @ Seattle					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fixt	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate		Look For Less	Life & Style		Clean House		Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO			Funny About Love				Charlotte's Web II: Wilbur's Great Adventure			How To Deal (6.50.PM)			Ballistic Ecks Vs. Sever			Six Feet Under 43 Can I Come Up Now?		White Oleander (10.50PM)	
Star Movies	Submarines (2.25 PM)			Murder Of Crows			Loser (5.45 PM)				Cruel Intentions (7.25 PM)			Home Alone 4			Air Rage		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN		English Premier League Highlights 2004/05											Premier Snooker League '05						
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/ Unbelievable Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax				The Private Navy Of Sgt. O'Farrell			Dracula Dead And Loving It (5.45 PM)				Anthrax			U Turn				Invisible The Chronicles Of Benjamin Knight	
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Just Cause		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	The District		Just Cause		Midsomer Murders: Garden Of Death			Missing (10.35PM)		The District (11.25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus				Italia Serie A				Advance Auto Parts 500 Highlights		Strongman		World's Greatest Auto Shows		Lingerie Bowl				Nopi Tunerversion	Bikini Destination
NBN		Taiwan/ Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Family Rosary Crusade		Paco Park Presents		Auto Focus	

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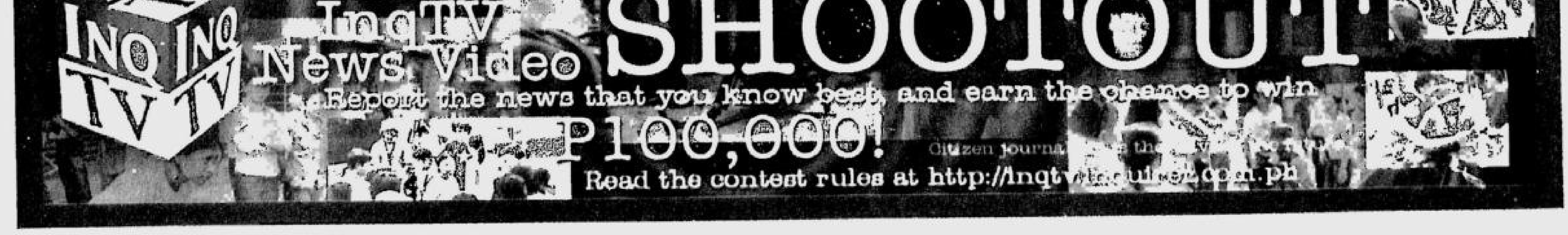
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FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

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GALLERIA
632-9115/16

1 BE COOL • THX
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
11:00 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
3 HIDE AND SEEK
10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
4 CLOSER
10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
5 SAHARA
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
7 GUESS WHO Sneak Preview
8 BOOGEYMAN
1:10 3:25 5:40 7:55 10:00
9 THE PACIFIER
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
10 ASTERIX AND OBELIX
12:00 2:25 4:50 7:15 9:40

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 CLOSER
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
2 SAHARA
11:10 1:40 4:15 6:55 9:40
3 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
10:30 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
4 BOOGEYMAN
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
5 GUESS WHO Sneak Preview
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
10:20 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
7 HIDE AND SEEK
10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

METRO EAST
682-8193 • 682-8199

1 BOOGEYMAN
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
11:20 1:40 6:30 9:00
3 GUESS WHO Sneak Preview
4 CLOSER
11:10 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10
5 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 8:50 10:30
6 SAHARA
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
7 THE PACIFIER
10:50 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30
8 HIDE AND SEEK
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30

NOVALICHES
935-3229/31

1 CLOSER
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 BOOGEYMAN
11.00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:25
3 HIDE AND SEEK
10 20 12:50 3:20 5 50 8:25
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
5 GUESS WHO Sneak Preview
6 SAHARA
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PIONEER
687-5378

1 SAHARA
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
4 CLOSER

CITISQUARE MALABON
288-2575

1 SON OF THE MASK 2
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
4 ROOM SERVICE

CAINTA
240-4661

1 THE PACIFIER
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 SAHARA
4 CLOSER

Katya Santos Gwen Garci and Jeffrey Quizon
BOSO

Boso is the first digital film by ***DIGITAL VIVA*** *and is directed by the award-winning director,* ***JON RED***

"BOSO, shot on a digital video, is a sexy dark comedy about Jake, caretaker of a boarding house by day and a peeping-Tom by night. In a place filled with twisted characters and absurd lives, he oversees each tenat's secrets, daily routines and private world. Jake continues "playing God" until he meets and falls for Cecilia, a woman who makes him realize the essence of beauty - unseen by the eyes. Later, a tragic accident leads to an unexpected twist and dramatic confrontation.

Starring:
KATYA SANTOS, ALLEN DIZON, GWEN GARCI, JEFFREY QUIZON

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april 13-19

STA. ROSA
(049) 837-0907

1 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD
2 SAHARA
3 BE COOL
4 ROBOTS
5 HOSTAGE

LIPA
(043) 757-3664
(043) 312-5870

1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 CONFIDENCE
3 NANG NAK
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5 CURSED

DASMARIÑAS
(046) 852-2125
(046) 416-4332

1 CLOSER
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 THE PACIFIER
4 5 CHILDREN AND IT
5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

ANGELES
(045) 892-2348

1 CURSED
2 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD
3 CONFIDENCE
4 HOSTAGE

IMUS
(046) 875-3838
(046) 471-8188

1 HIDE AND SEEK
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 GUESS WHO Sneak Preview
4 THE PACIFIER
5 CLOSER
6 SAHARA

STARMILLS
(045) 875-1927
(045) 961-5270

1 HAROLD AND KUMAR
2 NANG NAK
3 HOSTAGE
4 ALONE IN THE DARK
5 CURSED
6 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

BACOLOD
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(034) 441-0459

1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 HOSTAGE
3 HITCH
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5 NANG NAK
6 SON OF THE MASK 2

ILOILO
(033) 336-8070

1 HOSTAGE
2 THE FINAL CUT
3 CURSED
4 HITCH
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6 MILLION DOLLAR BABY

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GLORIETTA • GREENBELT

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

AYALA CENTER CEBU

AYALA MALLS **LoveMall!**

ALOHAYO
Featuring music from Disney's Lilo & Stitch Island Favorites
Sony Music

AYALA CENTER
April 21 & 22 6:30 pm
April 23 & 24 11:30 am, 3pm & 6pm
Glorietta Activity Center

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
April 29, 30 & May 1
3pm & 6pm
Activity Center

AYALA CENTER CEBU
May 6 to 8
11 am & 6pm
Activity Center

Also showing at Market Market on May 13, 4pm & 6pm
Pavilion Mall on May 14, 5pm
Metropoint on May 15, 6pm

An all reserved seats night in each mall awaits Discount Plus Card members

TOWER RECORDS LoveMall!

Catch Lilo's summer musical show live at the Ayala Malls featuring Bea Binene as LILO Chynna Ortaleza and Nadine Samonte as NANI Dion Ignacio and Tyrone Perez as DAVID Paul Salas as DANIEL Plus the SOP boys - Macmac Emil Edward and Yexel Directed by Freddie Santos

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
Anson Emporium Appliance Madness April 8-18, 2005	Star Cinema's CAN THIS BE LOVE Mall Show April 10, 2005	Sign Language Association in Cebu Inc.'s Culminating Activity April 10, 2005

AYALA

Ad Congress Party
April 14, 2005

GREENBELT Onstage AYALA CENTER

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES presents
Whose Wife is it Anyway?
at REP's GLOBE THEATER for the Month of April
For inquiries, please call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM

Visit the New Ayala Museum located beside Greenbelt 4 along Makati Avenue.
For inquiries, please call 757-7117.

AYALA CINEMAS

AYALA CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS GB4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Theater	Cinema	Film	Schedule
G1 GLORIETTA 1	1	GUESS WHO	
	2	HIDE & SEEK	
	3	SAHARA	
	4	CLOSER	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1	GUESS WHO	
	2	HIDE & SEEK	
	3 THX	SAHARA	11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	CLOSER	
	5	BE COOL	
	6	THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	
	7	THE PACIFIER	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1	HIDE & SEEK	11:35, 1:55, 4:00, 6:35, 9:00
	2	SAHARA	11:00, 1:40, 4:20, 7:00,9:40
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX	GUESS WHO	2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
	2 THX	SAHARA	12:50, 3:30, 5:10, 8:50, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	3	CLOSER	2:30, 4:45, 7.00, 9.15, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
	4	HIDE & SEEK	1:55, 4:15, 6:35, 8:55, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS
	5	THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15, 11:15 GUARANTEED SEATS
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX	GUESS WHO	
	2	SAHARA	
	3	THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	
	4	CLOSER	
	5	HIDE & SEEK	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1	SAHARA	
	2	SPANGLISH	
	3	CONFIDENCE	
	4	RACING STRIPES	

AYALA CINEMAS

sneak preview
APRIL 11 & 12
ALABANG TOWN CENTER • GLORIETTA 1 & 4
GREENBELT 3 • MARKET MARKET

Onstage

AYALA CINEMAS

berniemac ashtonkutcher
guesswho
some in-laws
were made to be broken

MTRCB Rating: PG-13 / Regular run begins April 20 at Ayala Cinemas

Onstage Greenbelt

in Ayala Center, Makati City is now accepting bookings for concerts, product launches and other corporate events for May to July 2005.

For bookings, please call Lissa at 752 7862

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service text hotline: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324

Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729 7777

All-Digital Cinemas

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The fun is in the finds

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Customer Service Hotline: 886-7515

Free Seating Cinemas: P70.00

① Closer
② Ms. Congeniality 2
③ Boogeyman
④ The Pacifier

Guaranteed Seats Cinemas: P90.00

⑤ Hide & Seek
⑥ Sahara
⑦ SpongeBob Squarepants

EVENTS! EVENTS!

MARKET! MARKET!

SALE! SALE!

TIME TO HARVEST THE BEST DEALS

April 15-16 10am-12midnight
April 17 10am-9pm

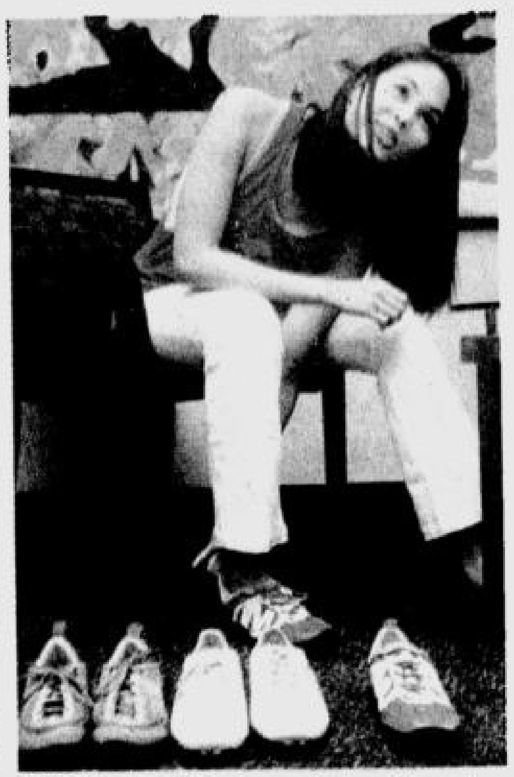
Special Events:

April 15
Star Records presents
Michael Cruz & Johann Escañan
6 pm, Activity Center

April 16
Axe: Choose the Girl, Spend Her Money
11am-6pm, Activity Center

April 17 to 20
GO F.I.S.H. Bazaar
11am-9pm, Activity Center

"MY FAVORITE bags were given by people I love."



RUBBER shoes? Go for comfort, not brand.

"NOW, slippers I collect. I have lost track of exactly how many pairs I own."

Love is
all we need

"I LOVE this shirt. It's so true, what it says."

SOME brands are big on eye shadow, some on lipstick, some on brushes.

Kristine: Closet makeup artist

From page A2-1

stage of wearing pajamas with Tweety Bird and Mickey Mouse characters. I also use shorts and drawstring pants."

BAGS

"I have four favorite bags. They're special because I care for the three people who gave them to me. The first two (an ethnic body bag and a gold clutch bag) were from Diet. Every time he goes abroad, he buys me stuff. The body bag was from Australia. I like its simplicity. I could just match it with a pair of drawstring pants or beach shorts. I think he got the other one in San Diego in the US. But I'm not sure.

"The third bag, a backpack, was given by a non-show biz friend. She gave them to me because she said the bag doesn't fit her, as she's quite chubby. It's a Donney & Bourke. This friend of mine, a teacher, said the backpack might also make her look like a student.

"The beaded bag was a gift from my road manager, Bea. I like the design and color combination.

"There are a lot of nice bags out there. What one uses reflects her personality. But it also depends on the occasion; you can't always be bringing big bags. I used to favor super big bags, in which I could put everything I need, but they gave me backaches. To think that I didn't get to use everything inside the bag, anyway. My mom used to tell me, 'Why do you have to bring your entire cabinet?' After a while, I settled for medium-sized bags. I prefer them in basic colors because I don't want them to clash with the colorful clothes that I need to wear on TV.

"I also don't go for expensive or branded bags. I'd probably be happy to get one Louis Vuitton, but I wouldn't start a collection. It's not practical."

KRISTINE/ A2-4

NOW SHOWING
BIGGER
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THE SpongeBob SquarePants MOVIE
2-GO
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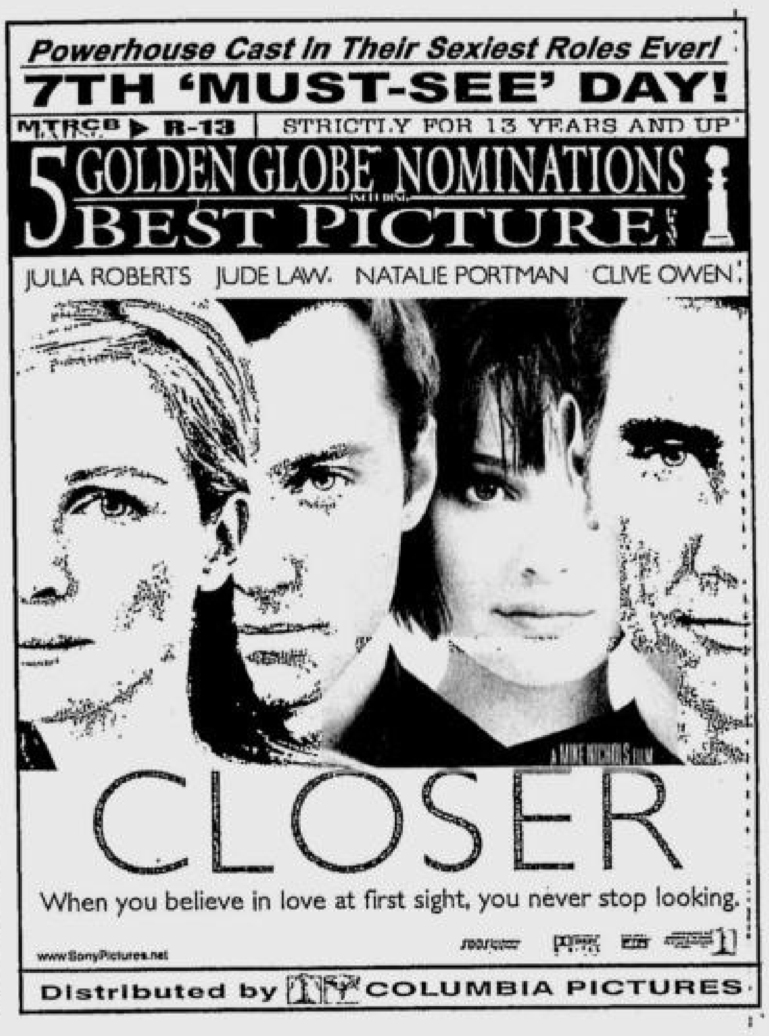

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A MIKE NICHOLS FILM
CLOSER
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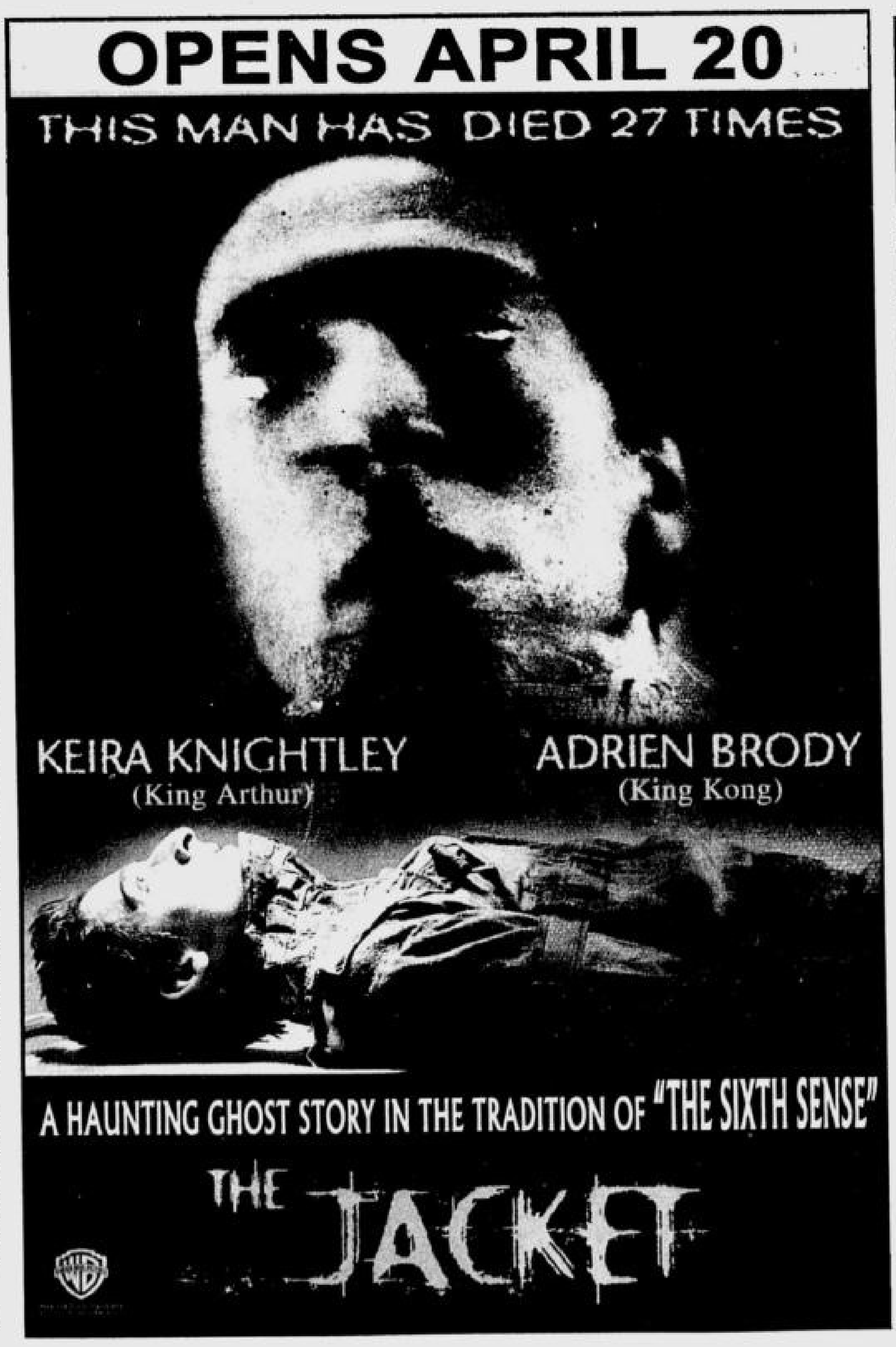

OPENS APRIL 20
THIS MAN HAS DIED 27 TIMES
KEIRA KNIGHTLEY
(King Arthur)
ADRIEN BRODY
(King Kong)
A HAUNTING GHOST STORY IN THE TRADITION OF "THE SIXTH SENSE"
THE JACKET

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SHE PAID HIM $6,000 TO BE HER DATE
AND GOT A-ONE-IN-A-MILLION LOVE AS BONUS.
DEBRA MESSING
DERMOT MULRONEY
The WEDDING DATE
VIVA
OPENS TOMORROW!

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
OPENS TOMORROW
FEAR COMES
FULL CIRCLE
samara
ring
2
A united international pictures release through Solar Entertainment Corporation
DREAMWORKS PICTURES
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ENTERTAINMENT

"THIS black shirt aside, I go for pinks."

"I USED to bring really big carryalls. Now I prefer medium-sized bags."

Kristine: Closet makeup artist

From page A2-3

PERFUMES

"I use different scents. I have Dior, Banana Republic and DKNY. People, especially those that I meet when I perform in the States, like giving me perfumes. I guess perfumes are the safest gifts. Perfumes have a short shelf life. You have to consume them as soon as possible.

"There are some scents that you can only use at night. These are perfumes that react to the sun's heat in a different way. You have to be aware of that, too."

ACCESSORIES

"This Calvin Klein chrono has got to be my biggest watch. I wasn't interested in big sports watches before because I thought my wrists were too small for them. *Hindi bagay.* This is, of course, another one of Diet's ideas. It has become my favorite watch.

"The watch with brown leather bracelet is quite unique. This is only six months old. This is the first brown watch that I've ever had. I like the color combination—brown leather and a bronze watch. I use this for semi-formal affairs. I also have a watch for more formal occasions. The color is similar to pearl and it has a small silver bracelet.

"I also like the one that I'm using right now. It's a Calvin Klein watch that can pass for a bangle. I've not seen anything like this. Time Depot provides most of my watches.

"I'm not the type of person who likes wearing jewelry. In fact, I buy earrings only because I need them for work. When I'm not working, I hardly wear necklaces and bracelets."

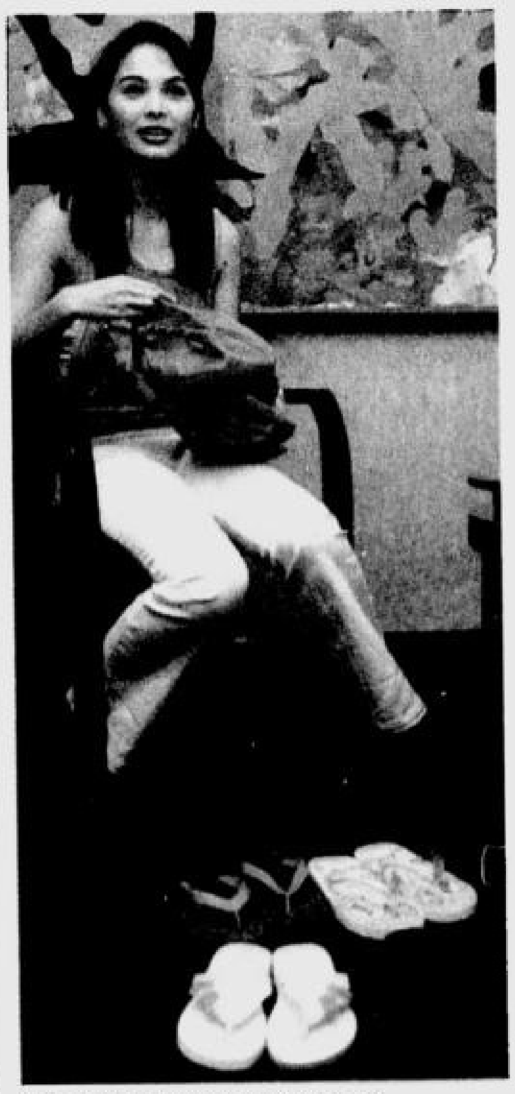
COSMETICS

"I don't go for just one particular brand. I'm constantly searching for things that will work well for me. But for my foundation, I prefer Mary Kay. It's not too thick; it's very light. For lip gloss, I use Carmex. It's very good for dry lips. When it comes to lipstick, I prefer Lorac and Sephora.

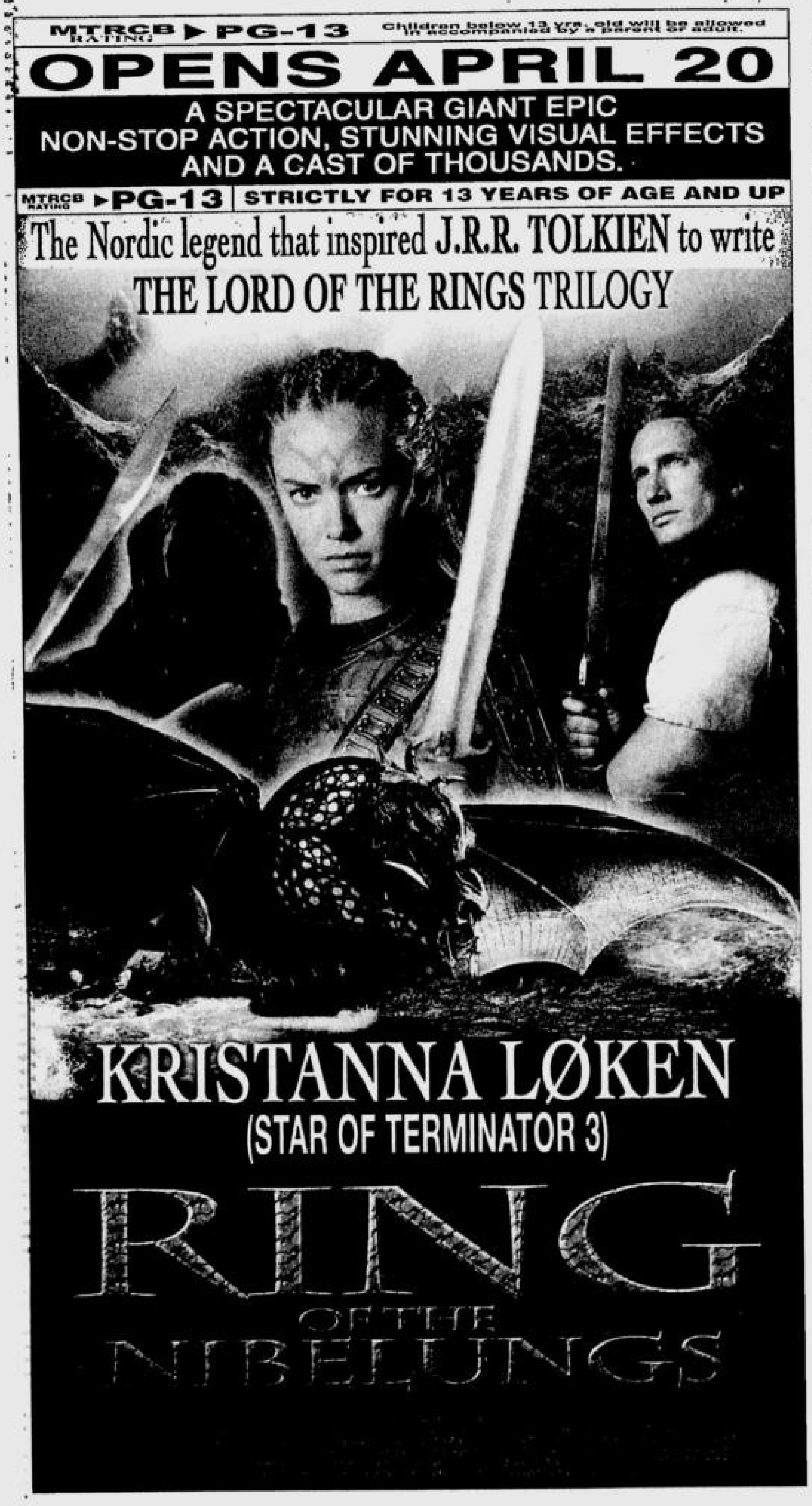
"I buy my own makeup. I'm very careful because there are brands that come in nice colors, but don't look good when you put them on your face. There are certain brands that have only good eye shadows (Kristine prefers Mac), other brands only lipsticks or brushes (she swears by Shu Uemura). It's good to experiment.

"Last year, I found this Dior lip color. I bought it immediately. I was attracted to it because of the gold case—it's quite unique.

"Actually, I want to be a makeup artist. So I read magazines that have articles on techniques that I could apply to myself. I'm serious. *Ako ang* makeup artist *ng buong bayan*. I always do my mom's and sisters' faces."



"I DON'T go for expensive bags."



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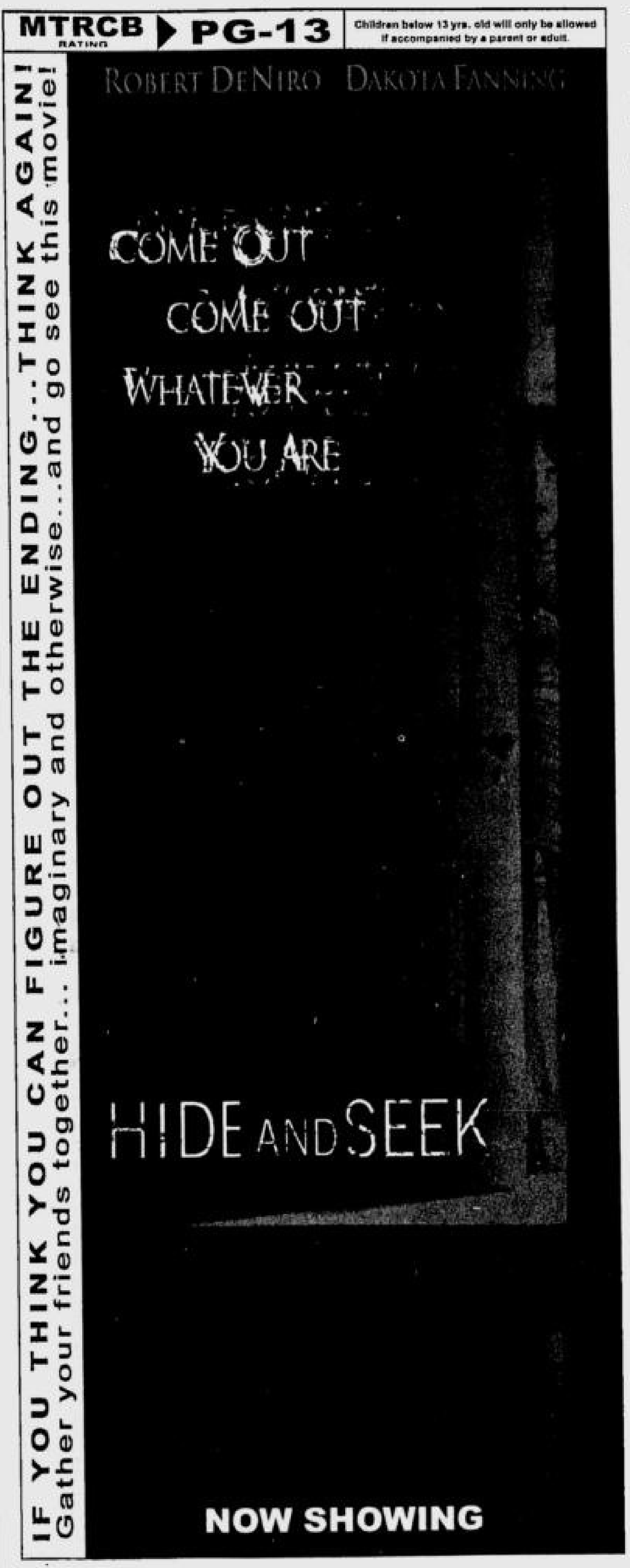
THE LORD OF THE RINGS TRILOGY
KRISTANNA LØKEN
(STAR OF TERMINATOR 3)
RING OF THE NIBELUNGS



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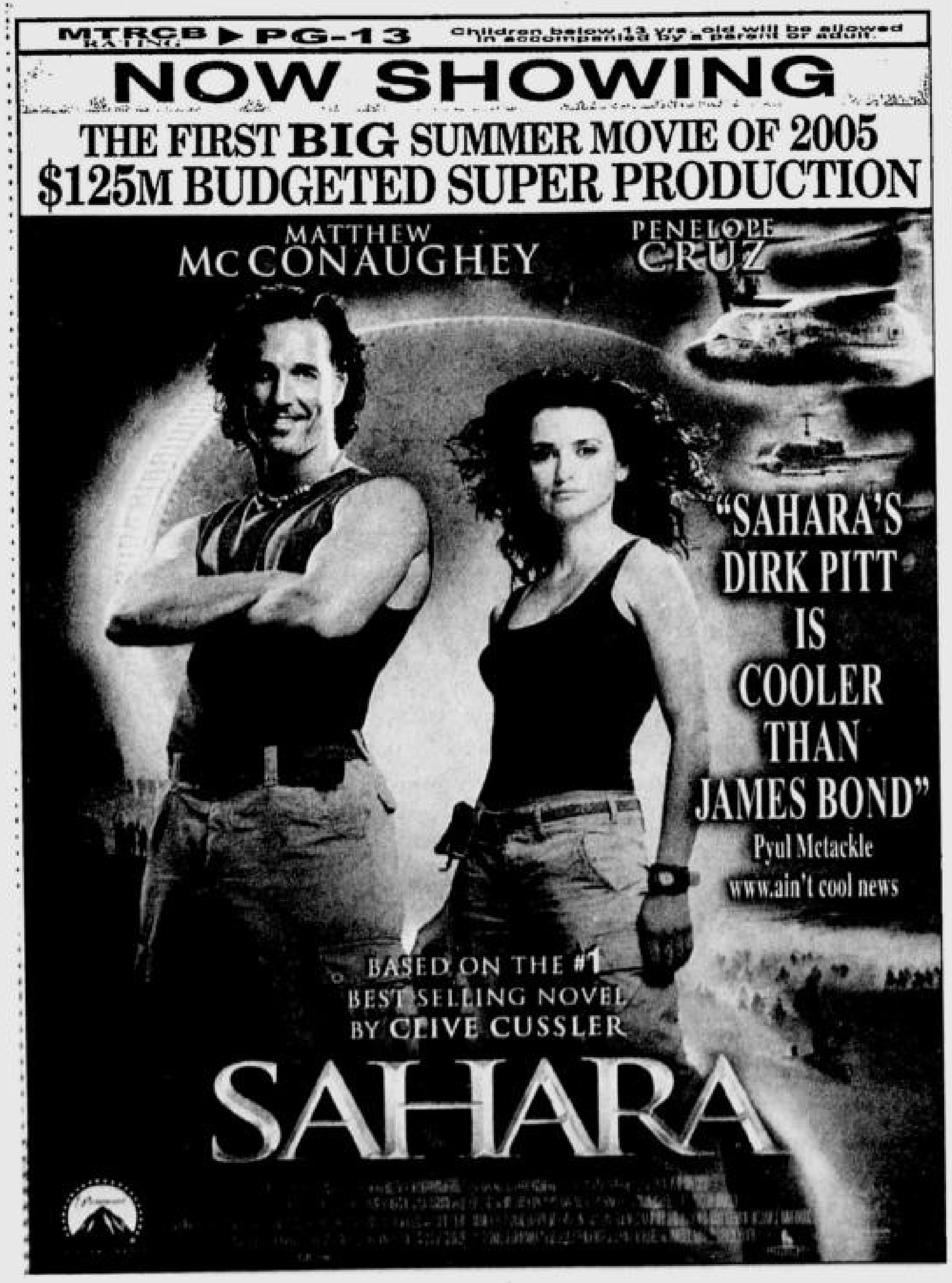
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN FIGURE OUT THE ENDING...THINK AGAIN!
Gather your friends together... imaginary and otherwise...and go see this movie!
ROBERT DENIRO DAKOTA FANNING
COME OUT
COME OUT
WHATEVER
YOU ARE
HIDE AND SEEK
NOW SHOWING



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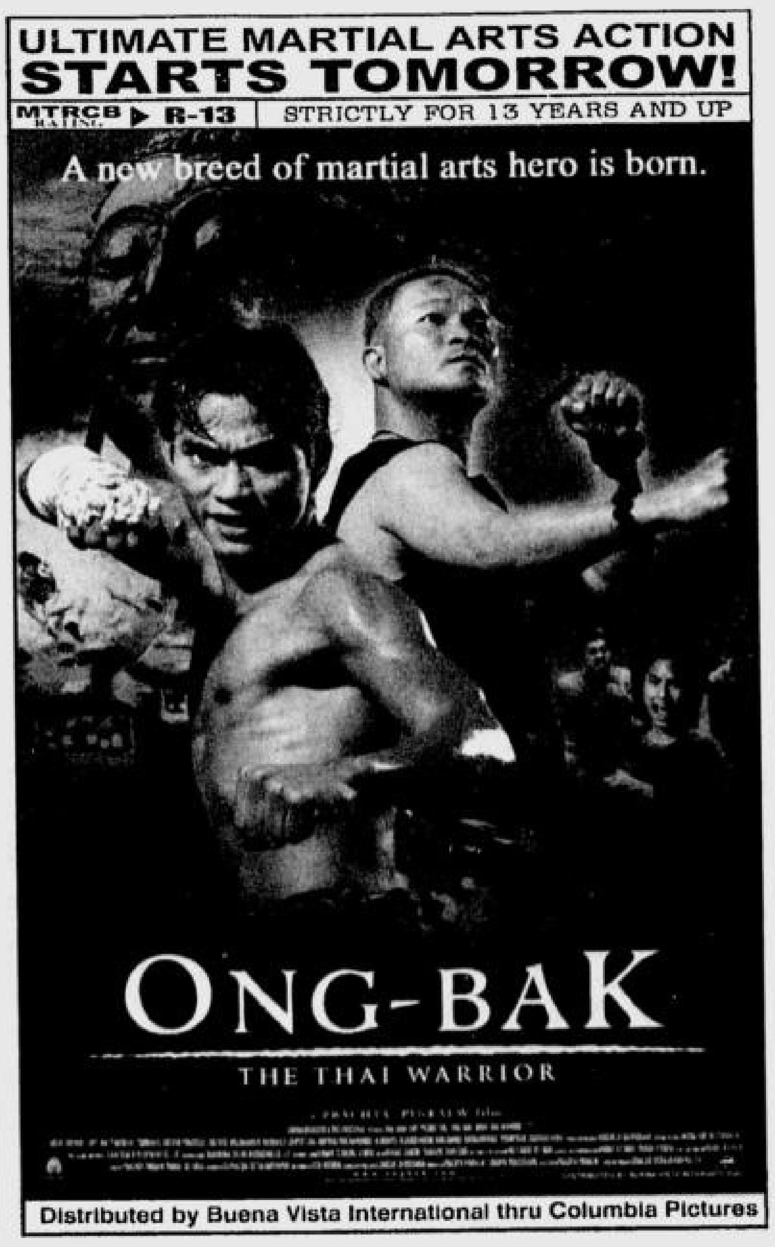
SAHARA



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ONG-BAK
THE THAI WARRIOR
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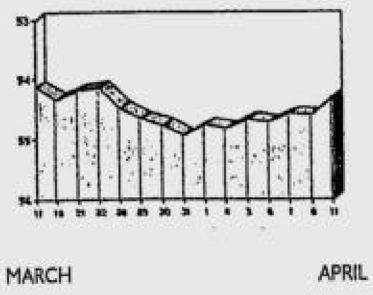


P54.30 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Aptil 8, 2005

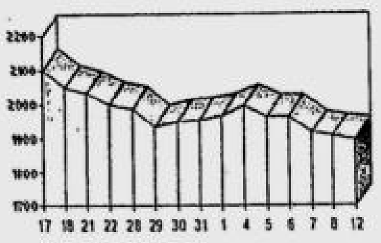
¥108.10 = $1
As of 5 p.m., April 11, 2005

GOLD: $425.00-425.50
per ounce Hong Kong April 8, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end down on fiscal reform delay

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES closed weaker yesterday for a fifth straight day as investors await the passage of amendments to the value-added tax law—the focal point of President Macapagal-Arroyo's fiscal reform package aimed at balancing the budget by 2010.

Traders said the market also continues to suffer from the central bank's decision last week to raise interest rates and the steady rise in local oil prices.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index lost another 9.97 points, or 0.5 percent, to close at 1,896.72. The main index slipped 7.53 points last Friday. The broader All Shares Index declined 12.38 points to 1,161.78 after retreating 4.66 points Friday.

Losers edged out gainers 35 to 33, with 47 issues unchanged.

"We still have the VAT overhang," said Luz Lorenzo, economist and market strategist at ATR-Kim Eng Securities. She said investor sentiment should improve once the Senate passes its version of VAT.

Astro del Castillo, managing director at First Grade Holdings, said the delayed passage of VAT and the higher interest rate will hobble the market in the coming days.

The central bank raised last Thursday its overnight rates by 25 basis points for the first time in four years, a move expected to boost broader interest rates.

Analysts said the focus shifts this week to Congress, which resumes sessions to tackle a long-delayed bill to increase value-added tax (VAT) to 12 percent from 10 percent as part of government efforts to boost revenue.

"There was continued selling pressure on blue chips led by PLDT (Philippine Long Distance Telephone). The general reason is higher interest rates, which will push the cost of doing business higher and put pressure on corporate profits," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

AP, AFP

$1.46B needed to finance takeover

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp. yesterday won the $1.46-billion (A$1.9 billion) takeover battle for Australia's National Foods Ltd. after New Zealand dairy group Fonterra pulled out.

SMC, Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage conglomerate, last week raised its offer for Australia's largest producer of fresh dairy products by about 8 percent to A$6.40 a share.

Fonterra, the world's biggest exporter of freely traded dairy products, said it would accept SMC's offer for its 19-percent stake in the Australian company.

National Foods managing director Peter Margin has "strongly" encouraged all National Foods shareholders to accept SMC's offer. "San Miguel is a leader in the fast-moving consumer goods market and has already demonstrated its commitment to Australia through its ownership of (Australian brewer) James Boag and a majority stake in (juice firm) Berri."

"Our shareholders, our employees and our suppliers have been through almost six months of considerable uncertainty since Fonterra announced its initial offer for the company in October last year," Margin said. "It is pleasing to see this process coming to an end."

SMC will fund its proposed acquisition of National Foods through a combination of new debt facilities and existing cash on hand. It has received underwriting commitments for debt facilities from ABN Amro Bank N.V., Barclays Capital, HSBC, Standard Chartered Bank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. worth $1.85 billion to fund its purchase of National Foods.

SMC also recently completed a P17.8-billion stock rights offering to raise more capital.

National Foods' brands include Pura milk, Fruche dairy desserts and King Island Dairy gourmet products, and it holds the Australian and New Zealand license for Yoplait yoghurt.

The company posted revenues of $924 million (A$1.2 billion) in the year to June 30, less than a third of SMC's revenues of about $3.2 billion in 2004.

Fonterra chief executive Andrew Ferrier said raising its bid would not be in the best interests of its owners.

"We have disciplined investment parameters and believe our offer represented full and fair value for National Foods. It would not have been prudent to go any higher," he said in a statement.

Fonterra will sell its stake to SMC, bringing a A$211-million profit over its average purchase price.

The New Zealand cooperative, owned by 13,000 dairy farmers, opened the bidding in October and last month raised its offer to A$6 a share.

SMC said it welcomed Fonterra's decision and looked forward to completing its acquisition of National Foods.

The food and beverage group, 41-percent-owned by the Philippine government, has in the past year bought a Thai brewery and drinks and hog farm assets in Vietnam and expanded into Singapore coffee and ice-cream businesses. In Australia, it bought half of juice maker Berri Ltd.

Meantime, a New Zealand newspaper report on Monday saying SMC was the successful bidder for NZ Dairy Foods, in a deal worth as much as $500 million (NZ$700 million), was denied by Dairy Foods. *With a report from Reuters*

Vehicle sales up 4.6% in first quarter

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE INTRODUCTION of new vehicle models pushed first-quarter sales up by 4.6 percent, with March purchases revving up by 25.6 percent over February figures, local assemblers reported yesterday.

The Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi) and the Truck Manufacturers Association said in a joint report that they sold 21,792 units in the first three months from 21,005 units in the same period of 2004.

Campi and TMA said overall sales were seen to increase this month and in May. At the same time, sales grew by more than a 25 percent to 8,640 units in March from 6,879 the previous month "partly due to some promotional and marketing activities by most assemblers."

The group also said that passenger car sales went up by 1.9 percent in the first quarter to 8,340 units from 8,816 units a year ago.

January to March sales of commercial vehicles—Asian utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, light trucks, and trucks and buses—increased by 6.3 percent to 13,632 units from 12,819 units.

The growth was largely carried by AUV sales and sustained LCV sales, the assemblers said.

VEHICLE/ B6

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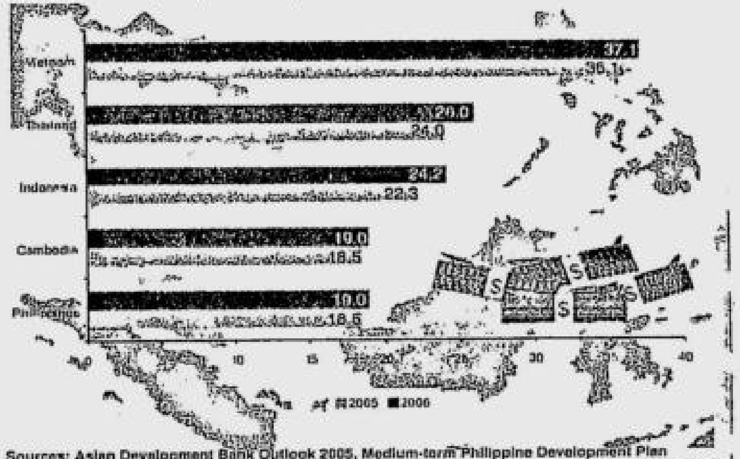
Figures that matter in our nation's life

Investment-to-GDP ratios

(2005-2006, in percent)



Sources: Asian Development Bank Outlook 2005, Medium-term Philippine Development Plan

THE PHILIPPINE government calculates that investment to gross domestic product ratio would rise from the current 19 percent to 28 percent by 2010. While Asian Development Bank sees increasing the ratio as important, ADB says what matters more is increasing the capital stock, which is dependent on investment-to-GDP ratio and capital productivity. Unfortunately the country scores low on both counts. ADB estimated that for every peso of capital stock only P0.35 of GDP is created.

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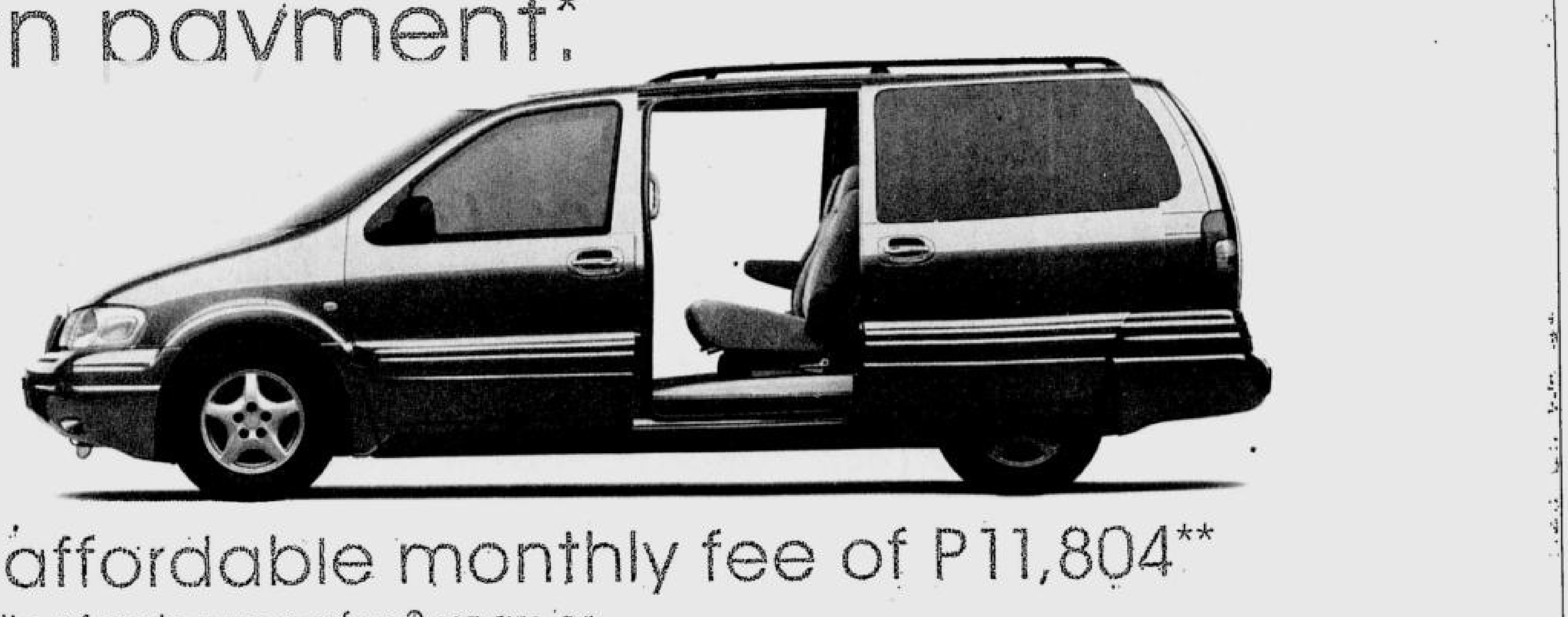

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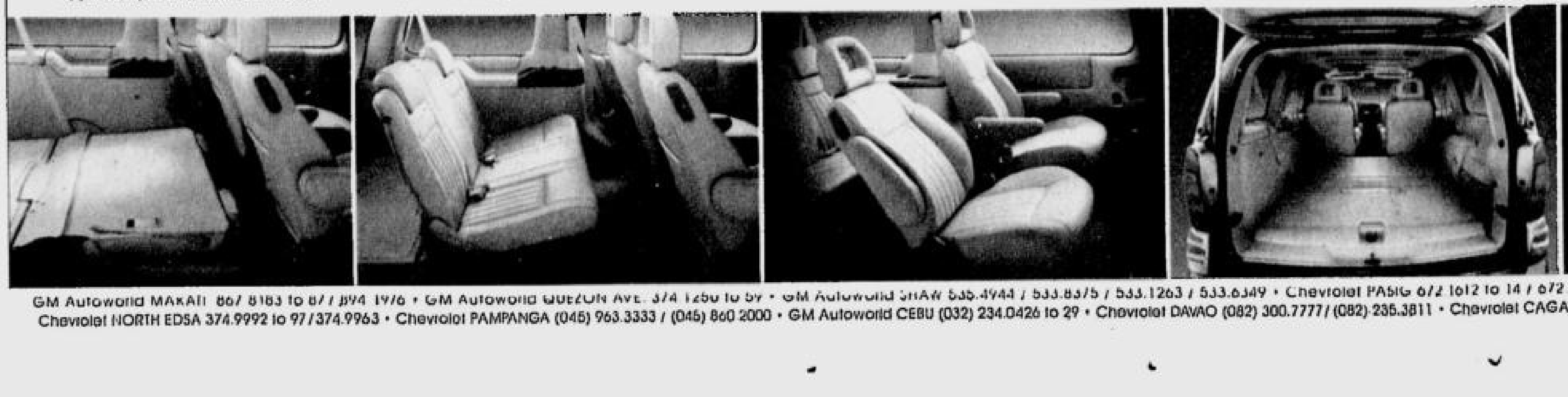

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Fuel on the hill

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

ACCORDING to an external legal counsel of Petron Corp., this partly government-owned business, and one of the "Big 3" domestic oil companies, is losing billions of pesos worth of fuel in its inventory.

The government owns 40 percent of Petron. So it might come as no surprise that, with the government in Petron, the company would have no idea that pilferage on a large scale has been going on in its backyard.

Really, Petron lost such a huge inventory. It amounted to something that you just could not carry around in your person. Fuel is liquid—bulk liquid, at that. It's not as if, to steal billions of pesos worth of it, you can just hide it in your pocket.

* * *

SOMETHING must have failed in Petron for the company to misplace millions of liters of fuel. Just look inside the closet, stupid!

But the whole thing can blow up in its face. For instance, the foreign part owner of Petron, Aramco of Saudi Arabia, is already screaming for an explanation.

Petron also happens to be a publicly listed firm. In a couple of months, it will hold its annual stockholders meeting. The public will lynch the company, if not its chair.

That's Nicasio Alcantara, who owns the conglomerate called Alcantara group in the south.

Before he starts to look like a fool on Petron's big hill of a problem, the company must do something about the fuel inventory loss.

The simplest way to do it, of course, without actually doing research, is for Petron to blame somebody else.

It is "common knowledge," Petron's highly paid external legal counsel told the court. He was referring to all that big time stealing in the "transport" of fuel in the country.

There, Petron has found the way out of its woes. It must blame those companies it hired to bring the fuel from its refinery to its depots. The haulers stole all that fuel.

Petron, in short, was the victim of a crime.

* * *

BUT if Petron is a victim of anything, it is the victim of its own ignorance. Look, because it had to argue against its culpability in a billion-peso crime, Petron had to rely on "common knowledge."

The oil refinery and distribution business is a highly technical line. They use all sorts of hi-tech instruments to measure temperature and volume, not to mention octane content and all that.

Moreover, fuel is flammable. A little neglect in its handling can easily kill people. Those in the business, from refinery to distribution, are obsessed with safety.

And here comes this lawyer, accusing breathing human beings of a devious crime, simply referring to the incident as, well, "common knowledge."

I mean, where is the proof? For without it, this media-sensational court case of Petron against its haulers can only sound like a witch hunt.

* * *

JUST a couple of months ago, Petron's external legal counsel who was hired specifically for the court case against its haulers, got a warrant from his favorite court.

The Petron lawyer alleged that the vessel called M/T Bocaue, which transported fuel to Petron's depot in Pandacan, stole some 11,870 liters of fuel during one delivery.

The vessel actually belongs to the Herma group which, for the past 20 years or so, has been a transport contractor for Petron.

The Petron lawyer filed the information in court last Feb. 11, accusing the M/T Bocaue crew of the crime of theft.

Media had a field day on the filing of the case. The name of the main stockholder of the Herma group, a certain Hermie Esguerra, got prominent treatment in the news.

It's just right that Petron should only pick on the Herma group. This group, after all, is by far Petron's biggest hauling contractor. It had the biggest sin, right?

* * *

MEDIA reports even talked about "secret compartments" in the vessels of the group, in which it could retain (i.e. steal) part of the fuel for delivery.

Petron, armed with a warrant, made a surprise visit to the vessel, right after it delivered fuel at the Pandacan depot. This happened five days after the filing of the criminal case.

Petron even detained the crew. Expecting to find close to 12,000 liters of fuel in the vessel, Petron actually found a lot of nothing.

Even the sheriff had something to report to the court: "We did not find anything unusual."

Petron was thus faced with another problem, which was this embarrassing charge of theft. It tried to prove itself before the court by using the "common knowledge" argument.

To avoid further embarrassment, Petron went straight to the Department of Justice, asking that the charged be changed from "theft" to "estafa."

* * *

WHERE is Petron's proof that big time stealing, leading to a billion-peso loss, has been going on? Its stockholders will surely want to know during the annual meeting this July.

But more than that, if I were part of Petron management, I would worry about how the company could lose millions of liters of fuel without anybody knowing how.

This simply means management failure of the highest order. The company should be firing its executives. Its entire board should resign.

Even the smokescreen from the drummed-up case against its haulers cannot hide such a glaring breakdown of controls and checks.

Petron claimed in the case that the "stealing" took place in the last five years involving 2,000 deliveries of about 18 million liters worth P375 million.

Look at that—five years in the making, millions of liters, thousands of deliveries! And Petron detected the damned thing only a few months ago? Wow!

* * *

METHINKS that, at best, Petron had no freaking idea how it lost that much fuel. I hope it is not just covering up for some syndicate inside the company itself.

For if Petron actually lost that much fuel—and I mean, PHYSICALLY lost it—then there must have been a collusion between the haulers and Petron insiders.

How come Petron did not file charges against anybody in the company? Petron never even fired anybody in the company remotely responsible for the loss.

Okay, I heard that a vice president of Petron resigned over the issue. But it was more out of a misunderstanding with the Aramco executives in Petron.

It seems that the Aramco guys have been pestering him to do something about the problem. But the former vice president insisted that the company should dig into it deeper.

They actually discovered the "inventory loss" through a computer program called SAP. The computer did not say if it was actual physical loss, or what caused it.

* * *

NOW if Petron must blame everything on the usual fall guy, which was the Herma group, it must be sure to win the court case, right?

Petron perhaps knows something that we don't about one of the many courts in this country. It filed an "intra-corporate" case against the Herma group in Manila.

Why was it an "intra-corporate" case, anyway? Herma is a contractor! It is not even a stockholder of Petron.

Well, I just learned from some lawyers that there is only one court in Manila that hears that kind of case. No need to raffle the case, in other words!

Yet insiders tell me that the standard contract between Petron and its haulers specifies that, should there be any dispute, both parties must submit themselves to "arbitration."

And they must do so either in Makati, where the office of Petron is, or in the city where the hauler's officers are, which in the case of Herma group is Quezon City.

As for my query as to why Petron went to court instead of going through arbitration, it said that whatever comes out of the arbitration, they will still go to court, anyway.

That's total BS, of course, because the contracts say that the result of the arbitration is final. Where did Petron get its lawyer, anyway? From a drug rehab center?

* * *

SURELY, despite the witch hunt of Petron, its contractors would want to save their business with the company. After all, they invested heavily on their equipment.

Not wanting to strain relations with Petron further, they suggested the hiring of technical experts to trace the reason for the big "inventory loss."

In fact, the haulers already contacted the UP Engineering Department to take a look at the technical aspects of the problem. For all you know, it could be a technical problem.

On the other hand, the fuel distribution process involves several steps, not just the bulk hauling from the refinery to the depots.

The haulers suggested that Petron should take a look at its internal process, particularly since one of its executives in the Pandacan depot was reportedly murdered.

* * *

WHY Petron would insist on putting the blame solely on its haulers—despite the clear lack of proof even with the "raid" and all—is the biggest mystery to me.

I don't even know if somebody big wants the huge hauling business of Petron all for himself.

But I know that the chair of Petron, Nicasio Alcantara, is an honorable man. In fact, he owns one of the more famous conglomerates in the country.

As to why the owner of a conglomerate would want to become chair of a government firm like Petron, your guess is as good as mine.

DOF opposes plan to extend SPV law

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance will not support the banking industry's call to extend the validity of the Special Purpose Vehicle law for another two years, citing concerns over its revenue impact on the weak fiscal position of the government.

The Special Purpose Vehicle Act of 2002, which will expire this month, grants tax incentives to activities related to the selling of non-performing assets of a financial institution to a special purpose vehicle. The law was passed to decrease the growing number of non-performing loans crippling the banking industry.

A DOF official who refused to be identified said the banks should have taken advantage of the granting of incentives when the law first took effect a year and a half ago.

"[The banks] have been given enough time to liquefy their non-performing assets," the finance official said. "Why haven't they fully taken advantage of it, when they were the ones that strongly pushed for the passage of the law?"

According to the official, the DOF now has a policy to rationalize all tax incentives.

In effect, he added, the extension of the SPV law would run counter to that policy.

The DOF will present its position on the proposed extension of the SPV law today, when the Lower House begins the hearing on the bill that will extend the law's validity, the source said.

Quoting figures from the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the official said that the government had already given out a total of P700 million worth of tax incentives under the SPV law.

He said the amount could reach billions of pesos should the SPV law be extended.

Bank officials have been clamoring for the extension of the law, saying that the time given was not enough for them to conclude all negotiations for the sale of their non-performing assets.

The BSP earlier said that in 2004, Some P26.2 billion of nonperforming assets were transferred through special purpose vehicles. *Michelle V. Remo*

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PETS

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The University of the Philippines - Diliman Bids & Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested contractors to submit their prequalification documents for the Infrastructure Construction & Renovation Projects of UP Diliman for the period April 2005 to May 2006. Only licensed contractors (at least Category C) with IAC registration will be accepted. Specialty contractors for Landscaping, Electrical, Waterproofing, Communication and other Infrastructure specialty works will also be prequalified as separate groups. Contractors who are eligible will be invited to bid on the following Proposed Projects:

Project Title	Budget	Probable Bidding Date	Project Duration	Project Title	Budget	Probable Bidding Date	Project Duration
NIP Building, Phase 4	P40M	May / June 2005	210 cd's	Third Floor of MSI Bldg.	P12M	May / June 2005	180 cd's
CSSP-FC (Phase 1)	P43M	October 2005	360 cd's	Renovation of Malcolm Hall	P10 M	June / July 2005	180 cd's
Miscellaneous projects costing from P100T to less than P5M.							
For other projects below P5M, please check subsequent advertisements on the EPS on www.procurementservice.net and the Office of the Campus Architect's website at www.upd.edu.ph/~oca							

Prequalification forms are now available at the Office of the Campus Architect (OCA), Coral Building, Lakandula Street corner De los Reyes Street, UP-Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of P300.00. Please call 920-5301 local 8032 / 8033 or 927-8656 for further inquiries.

A letter of intent addressed to the Chancellor through the BAC is to be submitted to the Office of the Campus Architect together with the accomplished forms. To be included in the initial pool of qualified/eligible contractors, **the deadline for submission of prequalification or eligibility documents is on or before 5 p.m. of April 22, 2005.** The BAC will still accept late applications provided that applicants submit their prequalification and eligibility documents at least forty-five (45) days before the scheduled bidding for the particular project. For more details and updates on projects to be bid, please regularly visit either the UP-Diliman and/or OCA website at www.upd.edu.ph/~oca.

All particulars relative to the eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids and awards of contracts, and other related matters, shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and other applicable rules and regulations. The BAC shall use the following criteria in evaluating eligibility:

Technical: 1. Complete documents submitted 2. Active PCAB License 3. Categorization, based on PCAB License:		Financial: 1. Current Assets/Current Liabilities Ratio greater or equal to "1.0" 2. Current Owner's / Stockholders' Equity:	
Category	Allowable Range of Contract Cost (in Pesos)	Category	Equity
Small A	Up to 0.5 Million	Small A	P 100 Thousand
Small B	Up to 10 Million	Small B	P 2 Million
Medium A	Up to 50 Million	Medium A	P 10 Milion
Medium B	Up to 100 Million	Medium B	P 20 Million
Large A	Up to 150 Million	Large A	P 30 Million
Large B	Less than or above 150 Million	Large B	P 40 Million

The time & date of pre-bid conference, submission and opening of bids, shall be announced and posted at the OCA bulletin board and website. Bid documents shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of documents.

The University reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any required formality in the bids received, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to the University. The University assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any firm for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid proposals, nor does it guarantee that a selection will be made.

(Sgd.) **SERGIO S. CAO**
Chancellor

(PDI - April 12 & 19, 2005)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late VICENTE C. CRISOSTOMO was extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. No. 73, Page No. 15, Book No. 457, Series of 2005 under Notary Public Lucila M. Lawas Yulok. (PDI-April 5, 12 & 19, 2005)

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE SCRAP/JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING: May 4, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, bldg.-1, Grd. Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
SCHEDULE - I	
1. One (1) lot of scrap metal consisting of junk diesel engine parts, stators, rotors, power cables, steel plate cuttings, steel annulus, steel beam, plant equipment and accessories located at Aplaya Diesel Power Plant, Jasaan, Misamis Oriental	P 6,344,000.00/lot
SCHEDULE - II	
2. One (1) lot of scrap metals consisting of metals forms, steel buoy with morring chain, steel circular frames, steel tanks located at the Re-Greening Field Office BNPP, Morong Bataan	P 750,000.00/lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE OFFER.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY) OF THE BIDDER OR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY AND ONE (1) COPY OF VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secre the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. Alfonso D. Alday, Manager, Warehousing, Inventory, Traffic and Asset Disposal Division (WITADD) at Bldg. 1, Ground floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C or call telephone no. 922-8431. For Mindanao bidders, bid forms may be secured from Mr. Milo Relucio, Section Chief, Warehouse, Inventory traffic and Asset Disposal Section. **Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 PM May 3, 2005.**

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI - Apr. 11, 12 & 13, 2005)

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GOLDJUNCTION CORPORATION
BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS

TO ALL STOCKHOLDER ON RECORD
RE Notice of Stockholder's Annual Meeting

The annual stockholder's meeting shall be held at the principle corporate office address # 12 Robina St. Gurgad, San Francisco Del Monte Quezon City at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon on April 12, 2005 Tuesday

AGENDA
1 Quorum
2 Election to the Board of Directors
3 Election of Corporate Executive Officers
4. To declare in default all/any member of the Board who have not paid the allotted shares of stock in their behalf
5. Other matters
6. Adjournment

In Quezon City, Metro Manila, this March 15, 2005

(Sgd.) MRS. MARIA SAGRARIO M. MARIANO
O I C Corporate Secretary
GOLDJUNCTION CORPORATION

(PDI - April 12, 2005)

†

Luis Ma. Guerrero y José

19 October 1932 – 11 April 2005

Peacefully died after receiving
the Last Sacraments.

His bereaved children **Louie, Lorenzo** and **Rosanna Guerrero**; daughter-in-law **Marielo Prieto Guerrero**; grandchildren; brothers **Angel Guerrero** (†), **Antonio Guerrero** and sister-in-law **Consuelo Sanchez Guerrero**, and other dear relatives and friends request you to pray for his eternal peace.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City. A Memorial Mass will be celebrated on Thursday, 14 April 2005 at 9:00 a.m. in the main church of the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park.

Interment will take place at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Parañaque immediately after the Memorial Mass.

In lieu of flowers, the family will appreciate
donations to the Tulong-Dunong Foundation
or The Jesuit Volunteers Philippines.

A professional soldier and a true gentleman
who steadfastly lived out his life's motto of

"Loyalty, Unity, Service"
to
God, Country, Family

MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPHUS Q. RAMAS, AFP

Former Commanding General of the Philippine Army (1980 - 1986)

Peacefully joined his parents in the presence of our Lord
on April 10, 2005 at the age of 79.

His loving wife **Emma**; sister **Wilma**; children and grandchildren

Wee & Jesse with
JJ, Jem-Jem, Bugoy JV

Bo & Benjie with
Cay-Cay, Budick

Froi & Libeth with
Rhea, Pau, Pauline, Marie, Angeli, Nicole & John

his loyal aide, **Moi**

other relatives, and his brothers at the UP Vanguard, Sigma Rho fraternity and OCS Fort Riley, KS request your prayers as he makes his final journey Home.

His body lies in state at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani Mortuary,
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 14, 2005 at the
Libingan Ng Mga Bayani after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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Our dearly beloved

ISIDRA DOLATRE OFIANA

of Agoo, La Union

Peacefully joined our Lord
on April 10, 2005 at the age of 99.

Her sister **Andrea**, loving nieces and nephews, cousins, in-laws and relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at her residence in Agoo.

Interment will be on Wednesday, 13 April 2005 at the Agoo Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. Mass.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

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CLASSIFIEDS

NFA to launch marketing assistance program for corn farmers

THE NATIONAL Food Authority will launch its Corn Marketing Assistance Program for Industry Producers/Users and Local Government Units (CMAPIPULGU) in simple ceremonies on April 11 in Candon, Ilocos Sur. The program aims to help corn farmers' organizations (CFOs) maximize their income potentials and assist them in sourcing their corn requirements using the NFA's network.

A memorandum of agreement will be signed between the NFA and the local government unit of Ilocos Sur. The implementation of the program in Ilocos Sur was approved and agreed upon by Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap and Ilocos Sur representative Eric Singson who will provide the initial counterpart fund of P1 million from his PDAF. Under the program, the NFA shall procure corn from CFOs at the current government support price of P7 per kilogram plus the premium price offered by the buyers/LGUs and store them in designated warehouses. The NFA will provide free use of its warehouse for a maximum of two months. However, a 1.5% carrying cost per month shall be imposed on the buyer.

For more information on NFA's corn marketing assistance program, please send inquiries via Text NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927.

2nd President Emeritus Cup

THE EMPLOYERS Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is set to stage the 2nd President Emeritus Cup on May 12 this year at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

To be participated in by CEOs, senior executives, corporate lawyers, guests from the country's top firms, the golf tournament forms part of several activities lined up for the 26th National Conference of Employers slated on May 17 to 18 at the Manila Hotel. The Conference theme is "The Filipino Entrepreneur: Local Roots, Global Reach."

Tee-off time is 8:00 a.m. Participation fee is P2,500 inclusive of green fee, caddy fee, lunch and raffle.

Sponsored by Castillo Laman Tan Pantaleon & San Jose Law Offices, Ancor Megaventures, Inc. and United Laboratories, Inc., the golf tournament provides an opportunity for the business community to relax as well as foster camaraderie and enhance business contacts.

For inquiries, please contact the Conference Project Team at 897-94-98, 897-46-56 or 890-50-05 or e-mail: nce26@ecop.org.ph

WESTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER
Mandurriao, Iloilo City
Fax No. 321-17-97
E-mail Address: wvmc@mozcom.com

Project Reference Number 001

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project Supplies and delivery of Hospital Equipment
Location Western Visayas Medical Center
Brief Description

Description	Unit Price	ABC Total Price
33 Hospital Beds	70 000 00	2,310 000 00
3 Stretchers 3 Cranks	86 000 00	258 000 00
5 Portable Suction Machines	50 000 00	250 000 00
3 Wheelchairs	5 600 00	16 800 00
1 Laparoscope w/ Accessories	5,000 000 00	5,000 000 00
2 Anesthesia Machines	410,000 00	820 000 00
1 Capnograph with Pulse Oximeter	350,000 00	350,000 00

Approved Budget For the Contract Php 9,004,800 00
Contract Duration 30 days after receipt of Purchase Order
Delivery Period Within one month after receipt of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1 Issuance of Bid Documents	April 12-29 2005
2 Pre-bid Conference	April 19 2005
3 Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (if single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	
4 Opening of Bids	May 4 2005
5 Bid Evaluation	May 5-17 2005
6 Post-qualification	May 18-25 2005
7 Notice of Award	May 31 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500 00 to the DOH - Western Visayas Medical Center cashier

The DOH-Western Visayas Medical Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved
(Sgd.) ROMEO P. VARGAS, MD, FPCS
BAC-CHAIRMAN

(PDI – April 12 & 18 2005)

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- ➢ FEMALE (Preferably Single)
- ➢ 22 TO 30 YEARS OLD
- ➢ TEAM PLAYER
- ➢ AGGRESSIVE
- ➢ HARDWORKING

Pls. call 892-9058 / 892-4427 for appt. or submit resumé to 1202 Medical Plaza, Cor. Amorsolo & dela Rosa Sts., Legaspi Village, Makati City

Market nearing May day rally

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

IT WAS a depressing week and I am 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration in this terrible heat. All week long, the Pope was lying in state accompanied by solemn music and he was finally laid to rest on Friday. Then on Saturday, Prince Charles married Camilla Parker Bowels. I did not see the wedding because it clashed with The Masters. I understand she was photographed so that she would have a royal I.D., and was later seen outside Kodak singing, "One day, my prints will come." And he did. "I never gave up hope of marrying him. My motto was "Never say Di."

I received an e-mail from the Department of Energy asking me to visit them as soon as possible. I thought that my constructive suggestions were being studied and had visions of a government appointment. I wore an Armani suit and expected to be greeted by the minister but, instead, a lowly clerk asked me if I was an illegal alien. I showed him my passport, ACR and marriage certificate. After examining the documents carefully, he merely said, "Pity," and slammed the door. Next day, my plastic goldfish died.

Here is a story sent to me by a reader: A middle aged couple, fed up with the snow in New York, agreed to have a second honeymoon in sunny Florida. Because of conflicting schedules, the husband had to leave a day earlier. He checked into the hotel and sent her an e-mail, but he accidentally omitted one letter in her address.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Boston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. She checked her e-mail for messages of condolence and fainted after reading this one: To my loving wife. Subject: I have arrived. Date: April 12, 2005. "I know you must be surprised to hear from me so soon, but they have computers here and you are allowed to send e-mails to your loved ones. I have checked in and everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then. I hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was. P.S. It's terribly hot down here."

A reader asked me why it took four years before my wife gave birth. It was my mother's fault. All she told me about sex was that the man goes on top and the woman underneath. So for three years, we slept in bunk beds.

Here is the weather forecast for Monaco—Rainier.

* * *

Since my SELL signal on March 8, when the Phisix closed at 2,149, the index has fallen to 1,897, a drop of 252 points. At that time, the degree of risk was 98.3, now it is down to 9, just inside the buying range of 0-10. It can still go lower but the market is oversold on a variety of indicators and certain blue-chips look attractive for a bounce.

With the Senate back from its long recess, they will be anxious to try to find some compromise on the VAT bill. I don't think that the 2 percent will be the main obstacle. Rather it is a question of what should be included and what should be exempted. Both the House and the Senate have divergent views, which will be difficult to reconcile so I do not expect an immediate compromise. I think that both sides will deliberate for the whole of this week and probably beyond. However, in the end, there has to be give and take on both sides and a VAT bill will be approved. In anticipation of this, the market should pick up.

Another bullish factor is that oil price have fallen $5 a barrel from its peak and the peso is firm. In the past, (Bangko Sentral) Deputy Governor Tetangco has shown himself to be adept at taking whatever measures are necessary, and he will be an ideal person to govern the BSP when he takes over shortly. On Friday, the bank raised the overnight rate by 0.25 percent, the first time in four years, but this had been anticipated and the 48-point fall on Thursday was unjustified. In any event, it was a minimal increase and purely preemptive to prevent the peso from weakening against a stronger dollar.

With inflation becoming a concern in he US, it is clear that Chair Greenspan will continue raising interest rates this year. This had the effect of strengthening the dollar, which has risen for the 4th week in succession. Unfortunately, this encourages foreign brokers to sell Asian equities to prevent currency losses and bring the money home. Foreign selling of Philippine stocks continues and on Thursday, it reached a net P384 million, half of which was attributable to MBT. Until the selling stops, I cannot see the Phisix making a new high so I am looking only for a short-term rally. Yesterday, the net selling was only P15 million.

Assuming that the government gives the jeepney drivers a fair increase, the next crisis will be on May 1. Traditionally, this is international Labor Day when the trade unions get together and demand higher wages. Because of the exceptionally high unemployment rate (including underemployed), the unions here are not well organized compared with those in other countries.

Even so, the workers here are becoming desperate and if nothing is done, we might have an Edsa 4. The P20 per day increase (7 percent) given 15 months ago had been more than erased by the current inflation rate of 8.5 per year so they are worse off than ever. I am sure they will demand over P100 a day, which is out of the question, but the government will have to raise the minimum daily wage of P300 by P30.

All this will do is to restore their purchasing power, but with the population increasing steadily, the number of people living below the poverty level will keep on rising. Anything extra will make us less competitive and increase unemployment.

I hope to be back next week but I have just been summoned to Rome. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Metrobank declares 60-centavo dividend

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BOARD of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, approved the payment of a 3-percent cash dividend, or 60 centavos per share, to stockholders.

The cash dividend, equivalent to P980 million, has yet to be approved by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Metrobank president Antonio Abacan Jr. was authorized by the board to fix or set the record and payment dates for the dividends once approved by the BSP.

On Nov. 25 last year, the bank declared a 2-percent or 40-centavo cash dividend per share. This involved P653.46 million and was paid on Feb. 14 this year.

For 2004, the bank paid a total of P1.31 billion in cash dividends, equivalent to 80 centavos per share.

Metrobank earlier reported that its audited net income reached P3.62 billion in 2004, while its total resources stood at P460.29 billion.

It posted a 53-percent increase in net profit to P1.02 billion in the first quarter from a year ago. This was net of provisions for probable losses of P503 million, up by 67.6 percent or P203 million from year-ago level.

In the meantime, other operating incomes of the bank in the first quarter grew by 13.1 percent year-on-year on account of: increases in bank commissions; service charges and other fee-based income; improved results from treasury operations, and, higher other income including contributions from its trust business.

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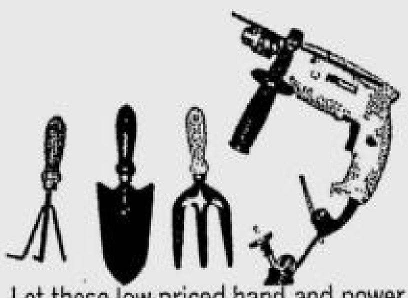

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2- Customers can also get trade-in discounts if they bring their old printers, fax machines, scanners and copiers.
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Tel.: 812-6047 (local 130 or 131) • Fax: 894-4174 • info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph
Branch Offices:
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CMP-La Union Ground Floor, M. Peralta Bldg., Quezon Ave., Sevilla Norte, San Fernando City, La Union Tels.: (072) 242-4587; (072) 242-0440
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Master Corporate Reseller:
Elite Machine (Araneta Ave., Q.C.) Tels. (632) 411-1194 / 411-0069 / 711-0374 (E. Rodriguez) Tels. 410-8609 / 410-8337
Master Retailer
QUEZON CITY Compex International Tel. 711-0288
SM MEGAMALL Compex SM Megamall Tels. 633-1661 to 62
MAKATI Compex Park Square Tel. 892 8382 to 84
ERMITA Compex Robinsons Ermita Tels. 528-4337 / 536 8027
DAVAO EMCOR Davao Tels. (082) 225 0712 / 305 6482
CEBU EMCOR Cebu Tels. (032) 346-2280 / 346-2286
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MAKATI
Ace Philippines, Inc. Tels. 810-4942 / 810-5003
Superlane Enterprise Tel. 899-0942
Micrógold Info Solution & Product Tels. 884-7570 / 804 1571 / 889 2800
Canon D-Zone Tel. 752 7361
Copystar Tel. 899 7103 to 04
MANILA
Copytrade Tel. 749-8155
F.A. Obena Marketing Tel. 256 6944
Solid Business Machine Tel. 241 4094
Ambassador Appliances Tels. 241-3872 / 242-9167
Officeman, Inc. Tel. 245 1217 to 18
Advance Solution, Inc. Tels. 526-4067 / 526-4130 / 526 3935
Nextwave Tel. 245 7581
Faxcable Tel. 526 3885
ORTIGAS
Compucare Tels. 722-9783 / 722-0721
Infopro Tels. 721-5250 / 721-8346 to 48
Pacific Office Machines Tel. 722-0970
QUEZON CITY NORTH EDSA
PC Chain Tel. 925-2228
Produta Tel. 723-1900
Silicon Valley Tels. 371-6944 / 371 5611
Fe Rol Marketing Tels. 929-8144 / 929 1982
Mitore Business Ventures Tel. 995 0296
LAGUNA VYP MSC Data Exchange Tel. 520 6007
BATANGAS Cagnet Computer Tels. (043) 921-1605 / 921-1650
VAR DEALERS
MANDALUYONG Sixth Generation Tels. 578-8900 / 533-3517
MANILA Microunlt Tels. 564-5555 / 564 5558
ORTIGAS
Award Microtechnologies, Inc. Tels. 632-9895 / 632-9873
Complink (Robinsons Galleria) Tels. 632-9896 / 632-9897
QUEZON CITY
PC Evotech Tels. 433-8849 / 928-3536 / 434-0731
PC Kiosk Tel. 712-4675
Techpoint Tel. 721 9948
PC Gamore Tels. 410-1210 / 721 3496 / 725-6288
PC Domain Tels. 937-6724 / 937 6228
Dreamchum (3) The PC Specialist Tel. 410-2733
SAN JUAN
Alta Service Company, Inc. / ASCI Tels. 725-6041 / 700 1357 / 725 6041 / 722-4720
SM MEGAMALL Brochure Computer Tels. 634 1296 / 633 2172
SM NORTH Datavlew Tels. 925-4565 / 929-0817
PROVINCIAL DEALERS
ABRA CAB Copy Center Tel. (074) 662-4421
BATAAN Bence Trading Tel. (047) 237 2151
CABANATUAN Capayan Valley Trading Tel. (044) 463 1220
CLARK Comclark Network & Technology Corp. Tel. (045) 322-0692
DAGUPAN
Bestop Computers Tels. (075) 522-5089 / 522-0092
Joyrung Comp Tel. (075) 523 4969
IRIGA Lucky Grocery Tels. (054) 299 2711 / 655 1122
ISABELA Profcom Ent. Tels. (078) 652-0328 / 624-5360
LA UNION
SLM Marketing Tel. (072) 888-0142
Infoplus Comp Tel. (072) 242-4917
LAOAG
DOC Kia Comp Tel. (077) 771-1175
Northpoint Comp Tels. (077) 772-0838 / 770-6511
LEGAZPI
Lucky Educational Supply Tels. (052) 480 7481 / 480-7587
PS Site Computer Center Tels. (052) 480 1450 / (0917) 558 3317
MASBATE Cyber Stop Computer Tel. (0917) 416 0700
NAGA KA Computer Solutions Tels. (052) 473 4259 / 811 7717
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TARLAC Ace Com Tels. (045) 982 1965 / 982 7024
TUGUEGARAO Northpole Ent. Tel. (078) 860 6101
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday April 11, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	100,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	49.5	50	49	50	712,500
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	180
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.76	0.78	0.72	.73	3,920,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	47	47.5	47	47.5	23,900
International Exch. Bank	18	18.25	18	18.25	56,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	33.5	33.5	33	33.5	636,500
Phil. Savings Bank	32	34	32	34	2,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	20,000
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	180,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2515	2515	2515	2515	610
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	541,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1650	1650	1650	1650	460
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	15.25	14.75	15.25	28,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.16	1.2	1.14	1.14	4,921,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	835	840	835	835	60,980
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	6,900,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	2,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.3	395,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1395	1395	1385	1385	113,520
Ivantage Corp.	.7200	.72	.72	.72	20,000
Philweb Corp.	.0200	.02	.02	.022	8,100,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	18	18	17.5	17.5	68,600
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25	24.5	24.75	611,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	5,231,000
Petron Corp.	3.4	3.55	3.4	3.45	4,599,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	154,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	473,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.63	.63	650,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	.6	60,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	328,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	20,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	34	34	34	34	87,700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	29	28	29	86,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	15,000
RFM Corp.	.9300	0.93	0.9	.9	250,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	57	56	57	16,500
San Miguel Corp. B	80.5	81	80.5	81	77,400
Vitarich Corp.	.2900	.29	.29	.29	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	10,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.2	2,734,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	146,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.041	.041	1,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.12	463,000
APC Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	1,160,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	2,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	.41	80,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	700
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	.17	3,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.04	27,040,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	.235	20,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.4	0.4	0.4	.4	400,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.25	2.8	2.95	3,843,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.048	0.048	0.048	.048	1,000,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.1	09.1	9	9	28,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	51	0 51	49	49	264,600
Global Equities Inc.	0.0925	0.0925	0.0925	.0925	400,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.58	499,000
IPVG Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	12,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	4,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.36	1.36 1.	34 1.	34	1,540,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.44	9,200,000
Sm Investments Corp.	247	247	239	244	1,747,010
South China Resources Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.2	0.165	.19	37,570,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	120,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	4 1.64	1.6	1.62	275,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.81	.81	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	.12	600,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.155	0.155	0.155	.155	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.3	1.32 1	.3 1.	32	1,051,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1	1.04	1	1.02	1,480,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.44	1.56	1.42	1.54	15,668,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	.31	300,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Abs-Cbn Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	14.5	14.75	14 5	14.75	113,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT-10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	9,600
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.6	7.6	8,946,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.95	0.94	.94	410,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	.29	1,190,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	.2700	.27	.27	.27	2,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.44	4,880,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.44	4,597,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	510,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.25	0.25	0.25	.25	20,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	.67	300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.165	0.17	0.165	.17	690,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.25	0.25	0.25	.25	200,000
SM Development Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	2,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.4	5,179,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	94,000
Benguet Corp. A	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	12,000
Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	3,500
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.34	0.35	0.33	.33	1,660,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	180,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	18,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	17,300,000
Omico Corp. .	0075 .	0075 .00	75 .00	75 9	0,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	70,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.34	1.4	1.3	1.3	347,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	34.5	34.5	32.5	33	172,100
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	3,000,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	.012	1,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	4,000
Sinophil Corp. .1	900	.19 .18	5.18	5 1	,360,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	50,000

DISCLOSURES

ALCORN Gold Resources Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 10, 2 p.m. at the Manila Golf & Country Club.

* * *

GLOBAL Business Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 26, 9 a.m. at the Penthouse of Metrobank Plaza, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of March 16 are entitled to vote during the meeting.

* * *

MANILA Jockey Club Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 29, 9 a.m. at the Laguna 2, The Bellevue Manila, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Only stockholders of record as of March 11 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

MAJORITY of Active Alliance Inc.'s shareholders agreed to sell 67.82 million shares of the company for over P130.8 million to Wespac Holdings Inc.

* * *

A. BROWN Company Inc. bought 40,000 of its own shares at P0.95 each.

Compiled by: Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

April 11, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.773275595	1	54.6070
Japan	Yen	0.007144	0.009239	0.5045
United Kingdom	Pound	1.458088	1.8856	102.9670
Hongkong	Dollar	0.099152	0.128223	7.0019
Switzerland	Franc	0.645418	0.834655	45.5780
Canada	Dollar	0.629857	0.814531	44.4791
Singapore	Dollar	0.467802	0.604961	33.0351
Australia	Dollar	0.596203	0.77101	42.1025
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.051183	2.65259	144.8500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206202	0.26666	14.5615
Brunei	Dollar	0.46639	0.603136	32.9354
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000105	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.019459	0.025164	1.3741
UAE	Dirham	0.210535	0.272264	14.8675
Euro	Euro	1	1.2932	70.6178
Argentina	Peso	0.26757	0.346021	18.8952
Brazil	Real	0.297986	0.385356	21.0431
Denmark	Kroner	0.134254	0.173617	9.4807
India	Rupee	0.017711	0.022904	1.2507
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.203521	0.263193	14.3722
Mexico	New Peso	0.069495	0.089871	4.9076
New Zealand	Dollar	0.553209	0.71541	39.0664
Norway	Kroner	0.122066	0.157856	8.6200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013029	0.016849	0.9201
South Africa	Rand	0.125879	0.162787	8.8893
Korea	Won	0.000762	0.000985	0.0538
Sweden	Kroner	0.10906	0.141036	7.7016
Syria	Pound	0.014896	0.019264	1.0519
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024497	0.03168	1.7299
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00036	0.000466	0.0254

Vehicle sales up . . .

From page B1

"March (sales of AUVs) showed a very optimistic growth of 56.4 percent due to relatively stable sales of AUV models and the introduction of a new model of a major player in this segment," they added.

Market pacer Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. recently launched its eight-seater IMV Innova. TMPC said this was a replacement of the Revo—an AUV—although the firm describes the Innova as a mini-van.

Company officials said they expected exports of parts to surge due to the initial success of the Innova, which is built in several countries with parts sourced from production hubs such as the Philippines.

In the first quarter, AUV sales went up by 13 percent to 6,363 units while LCV sales went up by 3 percent to 6,796 units.

On the other hand, sales of light trucks as well as those of trucks and buses dipped by 22 percent to 371 units and 102 units, respectively.

TMPC cornered the biggest portion of the overall market, with a 34.2-percent share. Toyota sold 7,508 units from January to March, or 0.6 percent higher than the 7,462 units it sold in the same period last year.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. ranked second with 15.5 percent of the market, selling 3,394 vehicles, or 6.6 percent more than the 3,184 units sold the previous year.

THE LEADER CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE INDUSTRY WITH ITS P30 BILLION TOTAL FUND SIZE.

BPI (FUND MANAGER) IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT ALFM REMAINS THE LEADER IN THE COUNTRY'S MUTUAL FUND INDUSTRY WITH A P30 BILLION FUND SIZE AS OF MARCH 2005. Moreover, ALFM has continued to outperform its benchmark 91-day TBill with its 7.63% net ROI for 2004, continuing to provide the consistent superior returns that it has become known for.

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(049) 562-2936; (074) 304-4502; (082) 235-3556

BPI Investment Management, Inc. (02) 845-5033 to 34

BPI Securities Corporation (02) 816-9190 or 9192

A mutual fund is an open-end investment company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in which the investible cash of numerous investors are pooled with the aim of achieving a specific investment objective. MUTUAL FUNDS ARE NOT DEPOSIT PRODUCTS AND, AS SUCH, YIELDS ARE NOT GUARANTEED. Mutual funds are not PDIC-insured. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.

DOLLAR FUNDS

AN ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT OUTLET

The mutual fund industry has recently witnessed a rapid expansion of dollar-denominated investments fivefold since their level two years ago. Dollar funds can be said to further the growth of the mutual fund industry. In fact, dollar mutual funds grew phenomenally in 2003 as it surged at a whopping rate of 353% over the growth posted in the previous year.

Given this aggressive performance of dollar investments, not to mention that such products are still the best hedge against currency devaluation, dollar investments may and still be an investor's best bet yet in the long-term.

The rapid increase of dollar investments in the industry can be attributed largely to the performance of ALFM Dollar Bond Fund.

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund posted an increase in net asset value from merely P64 million in 2002 to P2.1 billion by the end of 2003.

This was the same year the fund was converted into a US dollar-denominated mutual fund.

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund finished 2004 with 2.81% per annum return on investment versus the benchmark one-year US Treasuries which yielded only 1.19% per annum due to the relatively positive performance of the Philippine bonds. Year-to-date, the historical net return of the fund is 9.14% (as of April 8, 2005), with its net asset value climbing further to $58.93 million from its year-end level of $39.36 million.

For a minimum initial investment of only $5,000, an investor can benefit from professional fund management provided by ALFM Dollar fund manager, BPI Investment Management, Inc. which counts years of money management experience.

An investor can do subsequent investments for a minimum of $500.

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ALFM Dollar Bond Fund shares are sold through mutual fund sales agents of BPI Capital Corp., BPI Securities Corp., and BPI Investment Management, Inc.

SHOWN ABOVE ARE OFFICIALS of BPI Investment Management, Inc. (BIMI), BPI Capital Corp. and ALFM Dollar Bond Fund, namely (from left) BIMI President Fernando Jose Sison III, ALFM Dollar Bond Fund Director Emilio de Quiros Jr., BPI Capital President Natividad Alejo, ALFM Dollar Bond Fund Chairman Romeo Bernardo, ALFM Dollar Bond Fund Directors Francisco Luna, Isagani de Castro and Ramon Madrid, Corporate Secretary Sabino Padilla IV, and BIMI fund manager Anthony Emmanuel de Dios; PHOTO ON RIGHT SHOWS (from left) BPI Capital President Natividad Alejo, BIMI President Fernando Jose Sison III and BIMI fund manager Anthony Emmanuel de Dios answering questions from the media.

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A mutual fund is an open-end investment company registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in which the investible cash of numerous investors are pooled with the aim of achieving a specific investment objective. MUTUAL FUNDS ARE NOT DEPOSIT PRODUCTS AND, AS SUCH, YIELDS ARE NOT GUARANTEED. ALFM Dollar's NAV may fluctuate daily depending on interest rate movements or bond price volatility. The Fund may invest mainly in Philippine securities which carry Philippine sovereign risk. Mutual funds are not PDIC-insured. Past performance is not a guarantee of future results.

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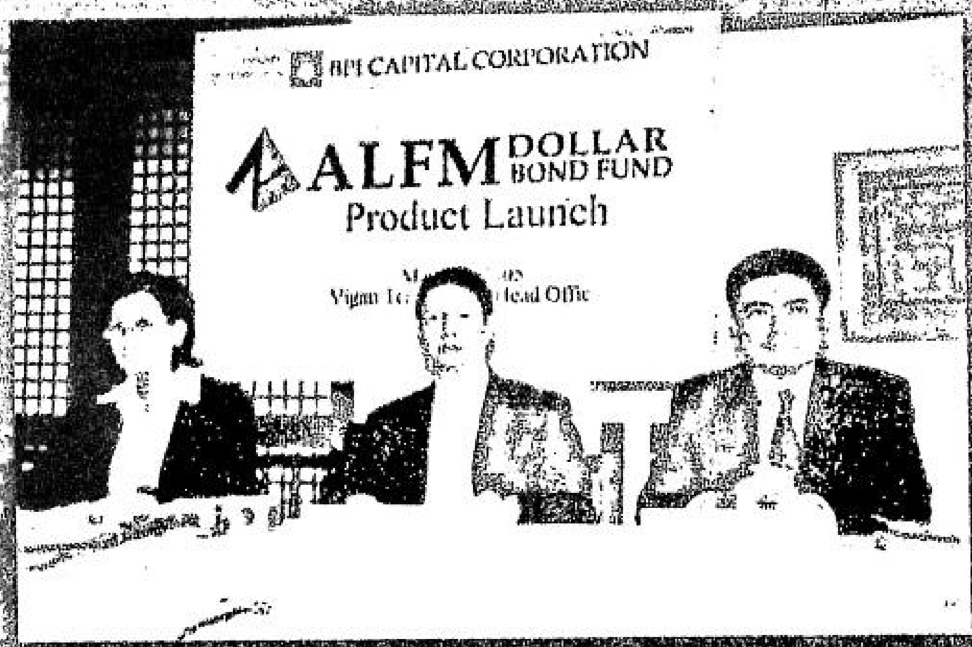

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The mutual fund industry has recently witnessed a rapid expansion of dollar-denominated investments [illegible]. Dollar funds can be said to further the growth of the mutual fund industry. In fact, dollar mutual funds grew phenomenally in 2003 as it surged at a whopping rate of [illegible] over the [illegible] in the previous year.

Given this aggressive performance of dollar investments, not to mention that such products are still the best hedge against currency devaluation, dollar investments may and still be an investor's best bet in the long term.

The rapid increase of dollar investments in the industry can be attributed largely to the performance of ALFM Dollar Bond Fund.

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund posted an increase in net asset value from merely P64 million in 2002 to P2.1 billion by the end of 2003.

This was the same year the fund was converted into a US dollar-denominated mutual fund.

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund finished 2004 with 2.51% per annum return on investment versus the benchmark one-year U.S. Treasuries, which yielded only 1.79% per annum due to the relatively positive performance of the Philippine bonds. Year-to-date, the historical net return of the fund is 3.14% (as of April 8, 2005) with its net asset value climbing further to $58.95 million from its year-end level of $39.56 million.

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HE LEAVES US NOT IN GRIEF NOR WITH SADNESS,
BUT IN JOYOUS CELEBRATION OF HIS LAUGHTER, HIS WIT,
HIS CREATIVE SPIRIT.

RAYMUND Y. VILLARUEL

SEPTEMBER 16, 1963 - APRIL 10, 2005

HIS MOMMY, AMELIA "MELY" Y. VILLARUEL; BROTHER, DAY; SISTERS, SOC V. PIKE AND DIDI; BROTHER-IN-LAW, EDWARD; NIECE GABY; AUNTIES LYD, ROSE, AIDING AND VICKY.

HIS PARTNERS, SOCKY PITARGUE AND ARIEL COMIA AND THE STAFF OF PITARGUE, COMIA & VILLARUEL COMMUNICATIONS INC.

HIS FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES IN THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY THAT HE LOVES MOST.

HIS REMAINS WILL BE AT THE UP CHAPEL, DILIMAN UNTIL WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2005.

FRANK RELOVA HERNANDEZ

Age 64
Ateneo Batch 61 Economics
Editor-in-chief-NIA

Wife **Precella DG Hernandez**; children **Lorelie, Corine & Edwin, Franklyn & Abigail**; brothers & sister **Juanito, Rogelio, Regino & Marissa**; grandchildren **Lorena, Jay-O, Hannah, Mark & Amber**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies at Slide N Dive Resort, Km 25 Banca Banca, Victoria, Laguna.

Interment will be on April 13 at 1:30 P.M.

Mercedes Aquino Pleyto

...passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on April 8, 2005 at the age of 92.

Her loving children **Cesar** (†) and **Emmy, Rosmo** and **Zenaida, Edna** (†), **Ador** and **Gerlie, Domeng** and **Tina**; brother **Leon** and sister **Virginia**; grandchildren, great grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest.

Her remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Chapel C, 143 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be transferred to Immaculate Concepcion Church in Sta. Maria, Bulacan on Wednesday morning April 13, 2005.

Interment will follow on Saturday, April 16, 2005 at Mary the Queen Memorial Gardens, Brgy. Guyong, Sta. Maria, Bulacan after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

I will always thank the Lord
I will never stop praising Him;
I will praise Him for what He has done.
Psalm 34:1

LETICIA JIMENEZ JIMENEZ
"LETY"
of Sorsogon City

Passed away in the grace of our Lord
on 09 April 2005 at the age of 71.

Her bereaved brothers and sisters **Nonito** and **Angelita Mendoza, Consuelo** and **Domingo C. Tutaan** (†), **Manuel** (†), **Milagros, Lucy** and **Ignacio Salandanan** (†), **Ramon** and **Thelma Valencerina, Arturo** and **Eleanor Soler, Antonio** and **Leonida Zalameda, Federico Jr.** and **Ruth Ruiz** and **Renato** (†); nephews, nieces, grandnephews and grandnieces, and relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe until Monday, 11 April 2005 and will be transferred to her residence in Sorsogon City on Tuesday, 12 April 2005, in the morning.

Funeral Mass will be celebrated at the Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral at 9 a.m. on Saturday, 16 April 2005. Interment will immediately follow at the Sorsogon Catholic Cemetery.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley,
I feel no harm. For you are at my side,
your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

A resort perfect for nature lovers

AN HOUR'S drive from Makati is a resort that is a repository of exotic trees and plants not commonly seen together in one place.

Kamuning and Kamias are streets bisected by Edsa, but did you know that one is a flowering bush and the other a tree whose fruit was used for the sour flavoring of sinigang until Knorr, Maggi and Mama Sita came along. And did you know that the mabolo is an exotic tropical fruit whose tree is the source of the famous black hard wood known as kamagong?

In the United States cotton used for filling pillows is harvested from a bush, but in the Philippines it comes from a giant tree known as kapok. And for coffee lovers, have you seen how a coffee tree looks like? If you pass Silang going to Tagaytay you probably have without knowing it, but have you seen a chocolate tree? Chocolate like coffee is extracted from grounded roasted seeds of its fruit and grows in bean-size clusters. Chocolate seeds on the other hand, grow inside a pod of the cacao fruit. It is edible and is eaten like you would a santol seed.

These and other exotic and more familiar tropical fruits trees such as durian, duhat avocado, bignay, chico, siniguelas, kasoy (cashew), sampaloc, santol, kaimito, guyabano, anonas, mango, papaya, banana, and the ever present towering coconut trees are labeled with their scientific and local common names give the resort a botanical garden atmosphere, complemented by its swimming pools, native cottages, cozy huts and tree houses magnificently landscaped with ornamental and flowering plants.

Doña Jovita Garden Resort is nestled in a 2.5 hectare property at the foot of Mt. Makiling located at Km. 57 of the Calamba National Highway. Look for the giant fountain jar (banga) as your landmark. It is an ideal take-off point for the short hikes to Mt. Makiling where one can enjoy a breathtaking view of Laguna Lake.

Doña Jovita Garden Resort has one giant pool, four medium-sized pools and two kiddie pools, one of which has a playground with cartoon mascots. All pools can be reserved for exclusive family use or functions for bigger groups.

The cottages vary in size, and can accommodate 8 to 20 persons for overnight or daytime. Day tour groups of 1,000 guests such as school field trips can easily be accommodated. Sports facilities include a billiards, table tennis, fishing, tug of war, mahjong, chess, darts, pony rides, volleyball, a half court and soon, a full-sized basketball court.

Doña Jovita Garden Resort provides portable grills for barbecuing, although most guests would rather enjoy dining at Tita Lettie's Pilipino Restaurant, which offers all-time native favorites such as bulalo, kare-kare, crispy pata, lechon kawali and laing. Among the seafood dishes, tilapia sa gata is the leading followed by the crispy fried hito and kilawing tanigue.

Right next door to Doña Jovita's tropical garden is its Mediterranean Garden. With just a short walk, the tropical garden atmosphere transforms into a manicured garden setting, interspersed with palm trees and flowering plants. The formality yet homey ambiance of Doña Jovita's Mediterranean Garden has made it the venue of choice for weddings, debuts, and even corporate functions such as team building and management planning sessions.

Doña Jovita Garden Resort is a must-see place which cannot be imagined fully in a feature article. If you want to commune with nature and listen to birds chirping, Monday to Thursday would be best. But if you enjoy the sounds of people having fun and enjoying themselves, go on a weekend. Don't forget to ask the front desk about getting you the famous original buco pie when you check-in. This way you avoid having to line up at the buco pie store.

Visit Doña Jovita Garden Resort's website at www.donajovitagardenresort.coms.ph or call (02) 807-0245/842-2057 or (049) 545-3740/545-6657.

STERLING PAPER JOINS FIRST QUADRANT

Sterling Paper, the top paper products manufacturer recently signed an agreement with First Quadrant, a multi-level distribution company, to include Sterling products in its roster of high quality merchandise. Photo shows (from left): Baby dela Fuente, trade marketing manager and Gerry Lim, EVP marketing, Sterling Paper; Doyee and Socrates Tumpalan, CEO and chair respectively, of first quadrant.

No Curfew watch stores launch Storm

MARCH 17 will forever be memorable for Shangri-La's Streetscape. Not only was it the most exciting and star-studded event of the year, but the most glamorous. No Curfew watch stores pulled off what could be called one of the most ambitious gatherings of all time. Storm, the hottest timepiece brand in the United Kingdom launched in a mind blowing presentation that combined music and fashion - leaving everyone in the audience gasping and asking for more.

The Streetscape couldn't have been better dressed - giant banners that spelled out the name Storm, a set design and backdrop in pure silver backed with a giant screen where clips of the Storm collection were shown.

Great food, a drink named Blue Storm especially concocted for the occasion and hot people all around, excitedly waiting to get a glimpse of the highly regarded collection.

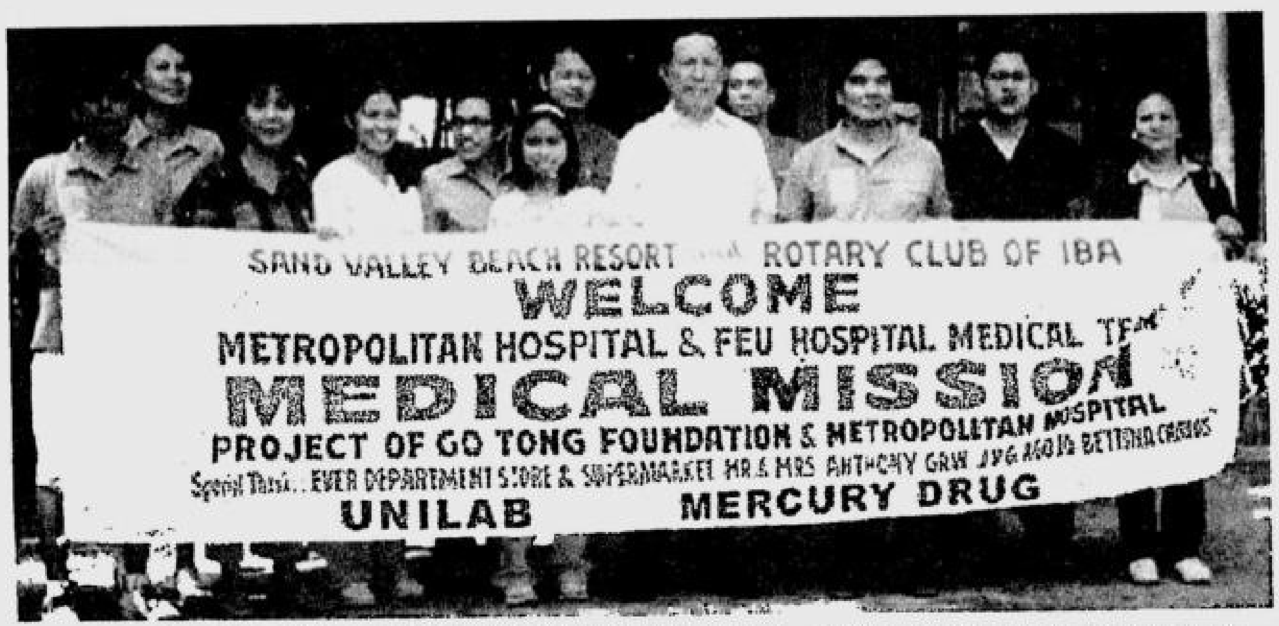
The show was hosted by Sam Oh of ETC and Jonard Yanzon. It started with the invitation video which featured No Curfew image model and endorser Sid Lucero. Talk about coming to life. As soon as Sid took the catwalk, giggles could be heard all over. The girls surely appreciated his looks. He was followed by a great number by no less than Ima Castro. A performance that brought to life a very timely blessing when rain poured gently for a few minutes. Giving the event an even Stormy feel.

The modeling was done flawlessly. Featuring watch after watch on the wrists of the Stormiest personalities today. Dionne Ignacio, Tyronne Perez and Kevin Santos for the male collection. And Ima Castro while belting out Bring Me To Life, Ella May Saison with a soulful rendition of Sweet Thing, Anna Fegi with the show-stopping Respect and Kyla, a No Curfew endorser and image model with her fabulous version of Alicia Keys' If I Ain't Got You.

And just when everyone thought is was over, the biggest Storm hit them when one by one, in the celebrity parade, the entertainment industry's brightest stars, the riders of the storm came on stage. Joaquin Valdes, April, Brent Javier, Yasmien Kurdy, James Blanco, Mike Tan and Dennis Trillo all proud owners of the very first Storm watches in the Philippines. Joining other world famous personalities such as Westlife, Blue, Arnold Schwarzeneger, Tom Cruise, David Beckham and Robbie Williams in collecting Storm watches.

There could not have been a more exciting evening. Not only did the stars come out that night. But it definitely was the night that gave birth to a big Storm.

Storm watches are now available in No Curfew watch stores nationwide. For inquiries call 634-2160 or 886-6690.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METROPOLITAN, FEU HOSPITAL MEDICAL TEAMS' IBA, ZAMBALES MEDICAL MISSION

The Medical Team of Metropolitan Hospital and FEU Hospital headed by Dr. Kim Shi Tan held a medical mission at Iba, Zambales recently. The 12-man team extended medical assistance to more than 300 indigents. The poor were also given free medicine and vitamins courtesy of United Laboratories and Mercury Drug. The Medical Mission is a project of Iba Rotary Club, Sand Valley Beach Resort of Iba, Go Tong Foundation, Ever Department Store and Supermarket and Metropolitan Hospital Foundation. Young star Bettinna Carlos, golf champ Jayvee Garcia Agojo, Anthony and Annie Gaw also extended support to insure success of the mission. Photo shows Iba Zambales Vice-Mayor Jun Farin, Noemi Sta. Maria of Go Tong Foundation and Dr. Kim Shi Tan posing with the young medical volunteers at the Sand Valley Beach Resort were the medical mission was held.

Weathering out the colds with the Decolgen team

PUSHING one's strengths to develop innovative technologies such as cameras, copying machines and printers could also mean pushing one's health to the wall. Those in this kind of business must know a good deal about managing time, productivity and employees' health. Otherwise, the smallest illness, such as one brought about by the common cold, can get out of hand and disrupt workflow.

This is the reason why Decolgen recently came to the office of Canon Philippines in Makati City to help the employees cope with colds and, in general, help bring out better work management and productivity.

In a mini booth set up at the lobby, the Decolgen On Call team members invited the Canon workers to attend a brief workshop on cold remedy, management and prevention.

The main speakers were led by Dr. Antonio Bernardo B. Amisola of the UERM Medical Institute. His talk on Colds, Causes and Management stressed the need to manage your health when you catch a cold, and how the proper medication goes a long way towards relieving discomforts, recovering your health, and putting you back on your feet quickly.

The Decolgen On Call team also introduced to the Canon employees the two types of doctor-recommended Decolgen products. Each is meant to be taken separately under different conditions. For those who need to get some work done despite the cold, there's No-Drowse Decolgen that gives relief from cold symptoms without the drowsy after-feel. For those who really need bed rest due to severe cold and sinusitis, there's Decolgen Forte caplet, trusted by doctors for over 40 years for its maximum strength to help you fight the virus and get you back on your feet quickly.

Along with the brief lecture, the team also provided free medical consultations and some free packs of Decolgen products, and invited everyone to try a bit of fun game at the booth, after which the participants got some more Decolgen prizes.

EASTON PLACE CONDO CONDUCTS FIRE DRILL

Easton Place Condominium, a 37th storey residential condominium situated at Valero St., Makati City and developed by Vernida Realty Develpment Corp (VRDC) recently held a successful Fire Prevention and Safety Ground and Aerial Drill exercises last March 11, in participation of Makati Fire Department, Philippine Air Force 505 Search and Rescue Team, Ospital ng Makati and Makati Rescue.

Hyundai VIPs arrive for grand launch

TOP officers from Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) arrive today for the grand launching of three of the latest Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines. This major Hyundai unveiling, which will also be attended by several officials from the government and the media, will be held at the NBC Tent in Taguig City tonight. Hyundai gears up to take the Philippine auto industry by storm with the introduction of their latest subcompact, lifestyle sedan, diesel-powered 4x4 SUV and internationally acclaimed luxury sedan. In the next two days, Chang Hwan Han, chief of Asia Regional Headquarters of HMC, Soon Nam Lee, the general manager, marketing division of Asia Regional Headquarters and Jeremy Lee, manager and Philippine representative of Asia Regional Headquarters, will not only attend the launching, they are also scheduled to visit the growing number of authorized Hyundai dealerships around Metro Manila. Together with the chair of Hyundai Asia Resource Inc (Hari), Edward Go and Hari's managing director Fe Agudo, they will discuss their plans for further expansion of Hyundai as a major player in the country's automotive market.

ATENEO HOLDS PARANGAL AT PASASALAMAT

Ateneo's most outstanding senior, junior and part-time teachers for school year 2004-2005 were honored recently by the Ateneo Schools Parents Council (Aspac) in simple rites dubbed Parangal at Pasasalamat held at the Escaler Hall, Science Education Building of the Ateneo de Manila University. Ateneo president Bienvenido Nebres, S.J. (second from right) led officials in conferring the coveted award. In photo with Father Nebres are (from left), Nick Baterina and Diego Poblete, Aspac vice president and president, respectively, Ateneo vice president for the Loyola Schools Dr. Anna Miren Gonzalez-Intal, former math department head Dr. Norman Quimpo (senior teacher awardee), Walfredo Belen of the economics department (part-time teacher awardee), Dennis Yu John Gokongwei school of management (junior teacher awardee), and Rose Acoba, chair of the academic committee.

Kids Kitchen Camp

TURN your kids' summer into a productive vacation. San Miguel Pure Food Culinary Center invites your children to join "Kids Kitchen Camp" where children can channel their energy and creativity to this culinary workshop that is both enjoyable and enriching. This gastronomic camp is open to all youngsters, ages 8 to 12 years old, interested to learn cooking and baking while having fun and meeting new friends. First batch starts on April 12, 13 and 15, second batch on April 19, 20 and 22 and the last batch on April 26, 27 and 29 (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays). Sessions will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at the San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center, Legaspi cor. Eagle Streets, Barrio Ugong, Pasig City. Enroll them now at 671-9876 locals 402, 2771, 404 and 405. Fee is only P1,200 for the entire course. Early registration and payment are required. Hurry, limited slots only.

Animation workshops

THIS summer, learn everything you want to know about animation with the much-awaited Summer Animation Workshops of In D Basket Productions Inc. Learn the basic of animation with workshops for beginners to be held every Friday at 6 to 9 p.m. starting April 1 to June 3, and every Saturday 2 to 5 p.m. from April 2 to June 4. Classes will be held at In D Basket Productions Inc office at the mezzanine floor, San Antonio Building, 7464 Bagtikan Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City. For more information, call (02) 729-5013; 896-9204 or e-mail indbasketproductions@yahoo.com. You can also send SMS to 0916-6533285, 0917-8515301 for inquiries.

Marks & Spencer promo

MARKS & Spencer rewards its loyal shoppers with a privileged raffle promo - a chance to win an all expenses paid vacation getaway to El Nido, Palawan. Exclusive to Marks & Spencer Text-Link and e-Link members, every P2,000 single receipt purchase from April 1 to July 17 entitles the customer to one raffle coupon. To avail of the promo, customers must present 2 valid IDs to validate their membership, fill up the coupon and drop at the designated drop box at the same Marks & Spencer store where they made their purchase. Raffle entries have two chances to win in two separate raffle draws, first on May 19 and the second on July 21.

Tumble Tots' programs

LET your kids have a productively fun-filled summer with Tumble Tots' enrichment programs. Make your preschooler's transition from home to school a happy one with "Explorations." Inspire your little Picassos to greatness with Tumble Tots' "Busy Little Fingers" art classes. "Little Chef" gets kids cooking while at the same time, teaching them the basics of good nutrition, math and language. Lastly, there is "Reading Adventure." Designed for kids aged five to eight, the program will help kids develop a love for reading by regaling them with tales of great adventures. Tumble Tots' summer programs run from April 11 to May 6. For inquiries call 687-6793.

'Rice is Life' contest winners

THE ASIA Rice Foundation recently announced the winners of the "Rice is Life" photo contest. Cicero P. S. Villanueva's "Best of Times" depicts a grandmother and granddaughter removing impurity from the rice grains before cooking - a nostalgic activity. Reynaldo C. Mondez "Magtanim ay Di Biro" shows a farmer distributing rice seedlings for transplanting in the field--a backbreaking activity. Introduction of direct seeding technology can eliminate this hard work.

Treasury rejects all bids for 1-year bills

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU Treasury yesterday rejected all bids for the one-year treasury bills as the market demanded higher rates in reaction to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' decision to raise its rates for the first time in five years.

The bellwether 91-day T-bill climbed to 6.685 percent, or nine basis points higher than last week's 6.595 percent. The rate for the 182-day T-bill was up to 7.99 percent, or 15.9 bps higher than last week's 7.831 percent.

All bids for the 364-day T-bill were rejected due to the "unreasonably high" rates sought by the market. It was the third consecutive time that the Treasury auction committee rejected all bids for the one-year debt instrument.

Aside from the increase in the BSP rates, the market sought higher rates in view of the slow progress in the bill seeking reforms in the value-added tax system.

Had the treasury accepted bids for the 364-day T-bill, its rate could have gone to as high as 8.889 percent, or 74.2 bps costlier than the 8.147 percent a month ago.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government could still afford to reject bids for T-bills because its cash position remained healthy. He said the government's cash holdings were expected to further improve as the state was about to make another foreign borrowing anytime soon through the issuance of euro-denominated bonds.

The government last made a bond float in January, when it raised $1.5 billion. For the whole of 2005, the government's foreign borrowing requirement was placed at $4 billion.

Cruz said the government accepted the bids for the three- and six-month T-bills because the increases in their rates were reasonable. He said the increases were within the Treasure's threshold of 25-bps, which were equal to the increase in the BSP rates.

Cruz said the Treasury was "respecting the market" when it allowed rates to rise, but added that it would only continue doing so as long as the increase would remain within the BSP rate hike.

The BSP last Thursday raised its key interest rates by 25 bps, in response to rising inflation brought about by skyrocketing oil prices.

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BORACAY'S
gorgeous visitors /E2

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

LEAD AND BE LED. Grab the moment for a special rendezvous at home.

Standing up for the Filipino male

By Cesar Miguel G. Escaño
Contributor

AT A CONFERENCE in Bangkok that opens today, Dr. Romeo Lee, a social demographer affiliated with De La Salle University, will present a paper on "Creating a New Understanding of the Filipino Male as a Social, Sexual Being."

"As a social, sexual being, the Filipino male's roles are multiple, diverse, pivotal and evolving. Crucial to his well-being is his role as a lover," says Lee, whose portrait of the Filipino is based on scientific data gathered through the years.

Fulfilling the role of a lover enhances the man's well-being, he adds. Being a productive lover relieves stress and promotes good health, as well as fostering quality relationships and improving sexual relations.

But the frequency of men's sexual intercourse tends to decrease, Lee says. Given competing demands, most neglected is the lover's role. He stresses the need to support the Filipino male in fulfilling his varied roles, central to which is the lover's role.

Though Filipino men are often caricatured as skirt-chasers, says Lee, most Filipino husbands are actually faithful to their wives.

A survey done in 2001 showed that Filipino men were predominantly monogamous. Some 87.1 percent of those surveyed had only one sexual partner in the last 12 months. Only about a 10th had two or more sexual partners.

Bum rap

"We've been demonizing Filipino men as if they have nothing positive about them," notes Lee, who received his Ph.D. in demographics from the University of the Philippines in Diliman and whose doctoral dissertation explored the sexual behavior and condom use of adolescent Filipino boys.

Today, there is a foundation that aims to emphasize the positive characteristics of Filipino men with regard to sexual health, he adds.

The Sexual Wellness in Men (SWIM) Foundation seeks to empower Filipino men by making them realize the value of sexual health and, ultimately, sexual well-being.

According to its executive director, Dr. Mike Arnonobal, men's sexual health has always been neglected, fostering a "culture of silence." Unlike women, men are more reluctant to seek medical assistance on sexual health matters.

While there are over 7,000 gynecologists (experts in women's health problems) in the Philippines, there are less than 300 urologists (specialists on men's medical problems).

"Globally, medical studies (show) less than 20 percent of men suffering from erection problems are medically diagnosed," says Dr. Arnonobal.

Sexual functioning is closely linked to a man's general health. The Filipino male has to perform sexually to achieve total well-being.

SWIM acts as communicator and cheerleader, sharing the latest medical information on men's sexual health and encouraging Filipino men to get professional advice on sexual health issues. Over 80 percent of males who seek medical assistance complain of erection problems.

The inability to "rise to the occasion" can be traced to several factors. Lifestyle and age can affect sexual ability. Contrary to the popular belief that sex is a good way to relieve stress, it may actually inhibit arousal and distract from the task at hand.

Arnonobal says a healthy lifestyle and an open attitude toward sexual health can empower men to take charge of their lives.

Proper context

He adds that what the SWIM foundation is trying to do is put sex in the right context. "Healthy sexual relations are important in forging ties between husband and wife."

Bayer HealthCare, maker of the sex-enhancing drug Vardenafil (brand name Levitra), hopes SWIM, which is now eight months old, would be an advocacy group that could enlighten the Filipino public about sexual

STANDING/ C4

Unlike women, men are more reluctant to seek medical assistance on sexual health matters

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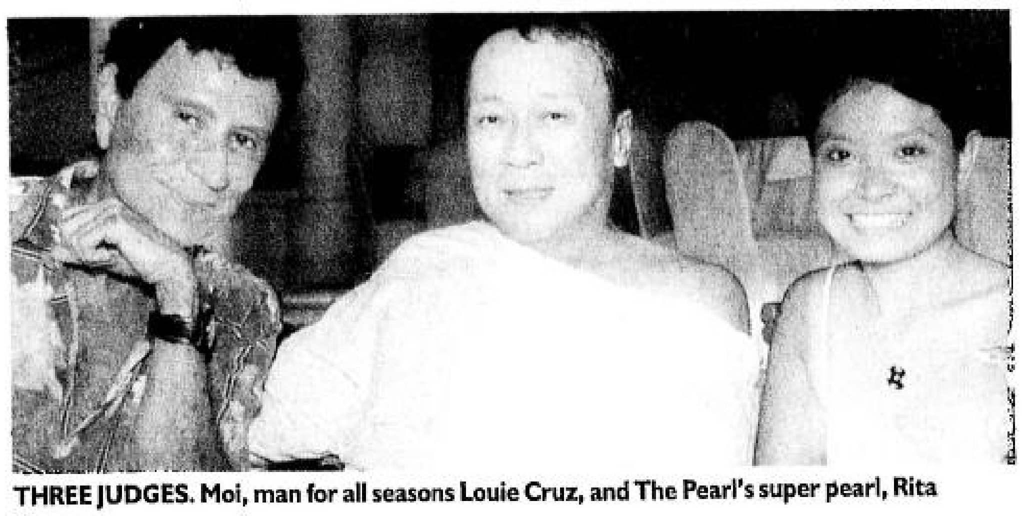


THREE JUDGES. Moi, man for all seasons Louie Cruz, and The Pearl's super pearl, Rita Sanson

MORE JUDGES: Popular Aklan Gov. Carlito Marquez with Stores Specialists's Mike Huang and Corporate Air's Allan Gregorio

ALOHA DAYS AND NIGHTS at the Pearl of the Pacific Resort and Spa. And the winners are... second runner-up Amaneci Grace Ramos, "Best in Bikini;" the Queen of the Cosmopolitan Jocelyn Oxlade; and first runner-up, gorgeous Faith Amigo

ENJOYING the pageant were still-on-honeymoon couple Monsour del Rosario and wife Joy Zapanta.

JUDGES on the lookout for a winner: Ed Hernandez and Dimples Lao

PEARL of the Pacific Resort and Spa owners, Greg and Marilou Sanson

Boracay's gorgeous visitors

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE GORGEOUS Miss Hawaiian Tropic International-Philippines 2005 candidates, all 26 of them, landed on Caticlan in two groups.

Flown there by Corporate Air, official carrier of the pageant, they were welcomed by Aklan Provincial Tourism Office ladies, **Rowena Itulid**, **Jesefel Enrique** and **Emelyn Isberto**, Mabuhay Host Association's **Freddie Alviola**, Malay town's **Meriam Sinez** and Pearl of the Pacific coordinator **Jovic Pagolato**, *palanggas*.

The babes were accompanied by **Jess Marquez**, chief of staff of the Provincial Governor's Office of Aklan, to their home for three days in Boracay, the lustrous pearl of all resorts, the Pearl of the Pacific, natch.

Then it was party-time for the girls who, with the organizers and production staff, had a sumptuous dinner on the beach. Afterward off they went to the Boracay Regency Beach Resort and Pier One Boracay and rocked the night away in a bash hosted by vice president for operations **Paul Sanchez**.

The hot bikini competition was held at sunset at the Pearl of the Pacific. It was superbly hosted by **Hans Montenegro**. Judges were Aklan Gov. **Carlito S. Marquez**; Corporate Air sales and marketing director, southern gent **Allan Gregorio**; Pearl of the Pacific's brilliant princess, **Rita Sanson**; party man **Louie Cruz** of the super popular, the place for the best home-cooking on the island, Mc-Sandro Bistro Boracay; Smart Addict Mobile Phone's **Ed Hernandez**; Rustan's young workaholic **Mike Huang**; **Dimples Balaguer-Lao** of Nothing But Water (the pageant's bikini sponsor) and *moi*.

Performing at the competition was the group Apoy, a fire-dancing duo composed of macho man **Cisco Gaerlan** and good-looking Canadian **Shawn Taylor**.

Some of those I zoomed in on were brand manager **Jane Lapuz** of 212 Sexy by Carolina Herrera; Rustan's marketing communications manager **Genny Puno**; and Yes! FM Boracay disc jockey **Darius Percival Genisan**, plus other beauty watchers like them, *palanggas*.

Blacked out

It was definitely a black night. The invitation was in black, invitees were one mass of black and even the star of the night was in gorgeous black, *palanggas*.

Well, world-renowned Samsung Electronics Phils. Inc., which just happens to be the top innovator in providing the best in electronic and cellular technology today, unveiled its latest so sleek and sophisticated phone, the fab Samsung D500 through "Black Night" at Fort Bonifacio's super popular in place, The Embassy Club, natch!

The whole club was in a dramatic all-black setup. Champagne overflowed and some of today's hottest names celebrated the phone's being named recently the Best Mobile Handset of 2005 by GSM Association Award, no less.

"The D500 phone is a cut above the rest because it incorporates all features possible to satisfy your needs, (and has) an ultra-chic exterior. It's definitely your secretary away from the office," **Maeng Dal Bae**, vice president for marketing of ICT, told us.

The gathering signaled the first social event of new Samsung Electronics president and CEO, cool **Hyuck Jae Shim**, who was joined by the entire Samsung *famille* who were all in black.

Beautiful eye-catching gals, **Shaan Bermudez-Hizon** and **Lexi Schulze**, hosted the affair superbly, heating things up with a video presentation that kept the excitement at high gear. **Hyuck Jae Shim** then made his grand entrance escorted by stunning top models (yes, they were all in black) to deliver his speech. His palm was then placed on a pedestal, "symbolizing the start of the revelation."

Then it was rock and roll party time, with the energetic performance of the Brownbeat All-Stars band. Fun casino games took place in the VIP room.

Seen were newlywed **Javi Berenguer-Testa**, **Raymond Rufino**, **Vince** and **Ana Bitong**. Fashion designers **Joey Carpo**, **Amanda Carpo**, adorable **Chichi Silverio** and vivaciously bright **Aimee Marcos**, plus others like them, were all in black, like the star of the night, dahlings, Samsung's classy, eye-catching awesome D500 available in black and two-toned silver.

COLUMNIST Rod Nepomuceno with heir to the throne Emilio Yap III, my pal Johnny Litton, and business magnate and car collector Jun Ablaza

GOOD-LOOKING Raffy Montemayor with Samsung's Smart Communications head Angie Limbaco, Marie Ann Balayo and Suresh Nanoo

JV and Ricky Yupangco

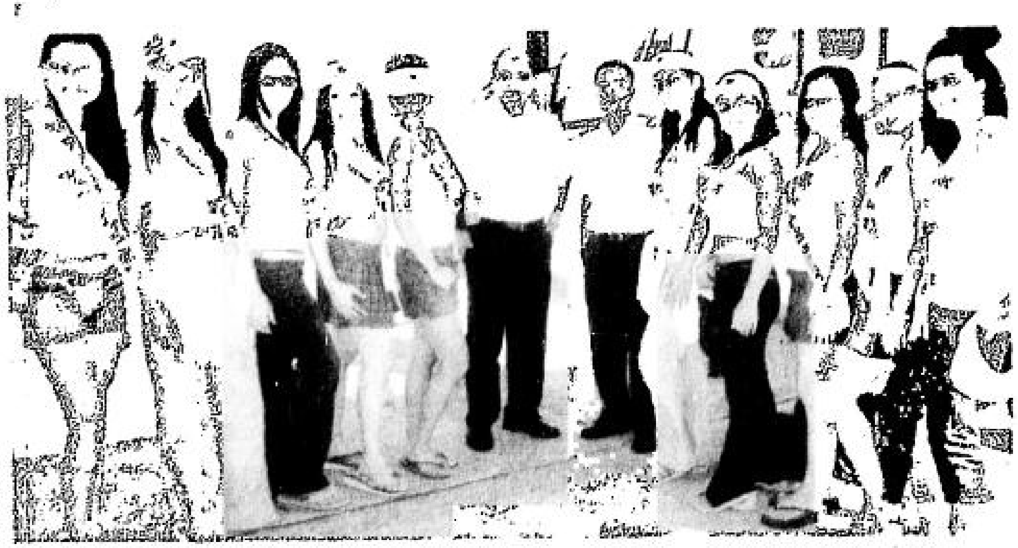
TERESA Garamendi with her husband, Ayala Mall's young Turk, Javi Hernandez

BLACK GANG. Santi Picornel, Jojo Silverio, Thess Gonzales, and Raymond Gonzales, with Françoise Stroonbant in blue. Oops!

AT BORACAY Regency Beach Resort: Tricia Marie Intong, with the hotel's operation manager Jess Marquez, Bang Rodriguez and Mary Chris Ross

AT PIER ONE. Jane Lapuz with Ancie Pamintuan-Santos and Gerry Puno

BLACK IS COOL. Pen Roque with Samsung's hotshot president and CEO, brilliant Hyuck Jae Shim, eye-catching Tin Moreno and fashion designer Cessie Colayco



CAPT. Mac Martinez and flight officer Jeffrey Palace flanked by Miss Hawaiian Tropic International beauties

ACHIEVERS. Bono Lin of TID Wellcom, Eddie Chen, CFO FAMI, and Kenny Khoo, country manager, First Asia Mobile Inc., distributor of Samsung Mobile

WE ARE FAMILY. Richie and Kelly dela Merced, with Bambi dela Merced and Raymond Gonzales

BIG THREE. Maeng Dal Bae, vice president of ICT Samsung, with Roger Chui of Graphic All In and Roy Co of QSL Dagupan

SUPERB emcees: Shaan Bermudez-Hizon and Lexi Schulze

BEAUTIFUL couple. Neny Montinola and husband Mandy Eduque

SAMSUNG Mobile's beauty and brains, Annaise Fragante

Embodiment of holiness and compassion

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IN A NEWS item on the front page of the Philippine Daily Inquirer on April 3, Fr. Fausto Gomez, OP, former dean of theology at the University of Santo Tomas, said, "The Pope (John Paul II) would brighten up on hearing mention of the Philippines, which had always given him a source of hope."

I can attest to that because I had the rare opportunity of personally meeting and talking briefly to the Pope in 1986 during a special audience at the Vatican.

I can still vividly recall that extraordinary event. I was one of several foreign speakers during the International Conference on Alternative Healing in Milan, Italy. The organizer of the conference, a close friend of the late Pope, asked us if we wanted to meet the head of the Catholic church. Of course, we all said, yes.

Though 15 of us flew to Rome, only five, myself included, got passes for the special audience.

About 2000 people gathered at the Pope Paul VI Audience Hall where the Pontiff greeted each group. Whenever he mentioned a group's name, its members would shout at the top of their voices and clap their hands as loudly as they could. This went on for about an hour.

All of a sudden, the Pope said in a very clear, strong voice: "And we would like to welcome here the members of the group who are doing Psychotronics Research (that's what psychic research is called in Europe), because they are also doing their part to help humanity."

A believer

I couldn't believe what I heard. "Really?" I said to myself. "The Pope believes in psychic research? How come many Filipino priests think this is the devil's work? Do they know the thinking of the Pope on this?"

Anyway, I was very happy to hear the Pope say that. Now there was something I could tell our conservative Catholic priests and Christian evangelists back in the Philippines.

After the Pope greeted every group, he personally talked to those with special passes. The five of us were asked to go to the very front row where the Pope was. My companions tried to get the attention of the Pope, but my voice was perhaps the loudest. I said: "Your Holiness, I come from the Philippines."

Immediately, the Pope's face brightened and he approached me with the most beautiful and disarming smile I had ever seen. Handing over the German edition of my book about Philippine faith healers, I said, "I would like to present to you this book that I have written about the faith healers of the Philippines."

The Pope received the book and then said, "Faith is what we need most in the world today."

When the Pope saw the cover picture showing a bloodied patient being operated on by a Filipino psychic surgeon, the Pope at once blessed the patient, making the sign of the cross. Then he handed my book to an assistant.

And that was the end of my conversation with probably one of the greatest Popes the Catholic Church ever had since St. Peter. Though my meeting with him was very brief, I could not forget that moment. It is not all the time that an ordinary person like me can have an audience with the head of 1.1 billion Catholics all over the world.

When I was standing close to the Pope I felt his very strong magnetic energy. It was very, very palpable and since I am very sensitive to subtle energy and vibrations, I thought I would collapse. I took a deep breath and managed to keep my astral body in control.

Overwhelming

Seeing Pope John Paul II at close range was an overwhelming experience. It made me feel as though I was talking to God himself. He was the very embodiment of holiness and compassion. I am not a particularly religious person, but that moment made me feel very close to God.

After briefly talking to those with special passes, he turned his attention next to the many people waiting to be healed. Some of them were on wheelchairs. A Mexican testified that in 1990 Pope John Paul II healed his four-year-old son of leukemia, which doctors declared terminal.

As the Pope began to heal each patient, we made our exit, happy with the thought that we met the Pope. I was also happy to know that my book would be at the Vatican library.

The late Pope was extraordinary for many reasons. But one reason I admired him was his broadmindedness. While sticking to traditional Catholic doctrines and dogma, he nevertheless was aware of the abuses the Catholic Church committed against those whose beliefs were different from its own.

Five years ago, he issued a public apology, saying: "We ask forgiveness for the divisions among Christians, for the use of violence that some Christians used in the service of the truth and for the behavior of diffidence and hostility sometimes used toward followers of other religions."

That is the mark of a great mind!

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail:jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program, 7-8 p.m., every Sunday.

NEW PGH PHARMACY

Dr. Gregorio Alvior, Jr. (5th from right), president of the Philippine General Hospital Medical Foundation (PGHMF), unveils the plan and perspective of the soon-to-be renovated pharmacy during the recent groundbreaking ceremony. The event was attended by Prof. Ronald G. Simbulan, vice chancellor for planning and development; Dr Jaime Galvez Tan, vice chancellor for research and executive director of the National Institute of Health; Dr. Carmelo A. Alfiler, PGH director; UP Manila chancellor Dr. Marita V.T. Reyes; UP president Dr. Emerlinda R. Roman; Lolita Escobar-Mirpuri, trustee, PGHMF; Dr. Edward C. Tordesillas, PGH assistant director for administration, Trustee, PGHMF; Dr. Virgilio M. Novero, Jr., PGH coordinator for resource generation, Trustee, PGHMF; and Sally B. Maliuanag, trustee, PGHMF. Call 5362874 or 5218450 loc 3061.

Special package for boys' 'summer ritual'

HEALTHWAY Medical Clinics, the country's largest network of mall-based outpatient facilities, is offering a circumcision package of P2,500 inclusive of doctor's fee and use of the operating room.

Only boys aged 7-14 may avail of the package.

Healthway also gives parents the following tips to ensure that their son's circumcision is safe: The operation site must be cleaned with betadine; to relieve the pain, mefenamic acid or any other painkiller may be administered; recovery period is at least a week, during which time the boy must refrain from engaging in strenuous activities. He may take a bath three days after the operation and also resume his normal activities, as long as these are not strenuous.

Call 8923731, 7514959 or 0917-8904929. Healthway has branches at Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall, Greenbelt Shopping Center, Shangri-La Plaza, SM City North Edsa and Robinsons Place Manila.

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Bring down bad cholesterol

DR. MARIO Rosenberg, Herbalife International Medical advisory board member, said most diseases of the past 20 years were caused by unmanageable eating habits and lack of exercise, resulting in obesity.

He said obesity, as some medical studies had shown, increased the risk of cancer, diabetes, and heart disorders.

Herbalife International Phils. Inc. launched recently Herbalifeline with Omega 3 Fatty Acid that reduced bad cholesterol.

Herbalifeline is an exclusive blend of highly refined marine lipids containing high-quality Omega-3 fatty acids. It has premium-grade deodorized fish oil.

Herbalifeline with Omega-3 fatty acids can be taken daily for optimum results. It is easy to digest and has minimal fish-oil taste during digestion.

Omega-3 is found mainly in fish, especially herring, mackerel, sardines etc. Small amounts of omega-3 are also found in eggs. Certain vegetable oils like linseed (flaxseed), rapeseed (canola) and walnut oil contain a type of omega-3.

Herbalife International Phils., Inc. is at G/F JAKA 6780 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Call 7515349.

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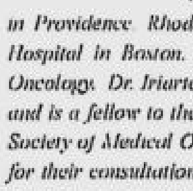
What is leukemia?

Take Charge Doc!

Leukemia is defined as an uncontrolled proliferation of the blood cells which has undergone malignant transformation. The cause of the disease is unknown. Leukemia comes in various types and is grouped into acute and the chronic kind where the former comprises about 40-50% of all cancers in children.

Often, early detection of leukemia is difficult considering that some of the symptoms, like skin and mucosal membrane bleeding as well as organ enlargement, are the late manifestations of the disease. Its early signs and symptoms are often not specific to leukemia like fever, irritability, lethargy, tiredness, loss of appetite, aches and paleness which, if presenting alone may not be suggestive of malignancy.

Diagnosis of leukemia is done through microscopic examinations of the blood and bone marrow and treatment may include the use of many drugs and other modalities in a carefully orchestrated schedule which lasts more than two years requiring frequent hospital visits.



Dr. Pelagio V. Iriarte, Jr. enlightens us on the cancers common to children. Dr. Iriarte, who practices in Davao Doctors Hospital, specializes in the field of Pediatrics. He finished medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and took his residency training for his specialization at Charles V. Chapin Hospital in Providence Rhode Island and at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He also holds a subspecialty in Pediatric Oncology. Dr. Iriarte has had over 40 years of clinical experience and is a fellow to the Philippine Pediatric Society and Philippine Society of Medical Oncology. MEDICard members may visit him for their consultation needs on weekdays from 10 AM until 1 PM and again from 4 PM to 6 in the evening.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

Weight-loss aid harnesses power of green tea

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THERMOGREEN Tea is the first clinically-proven, ephedra-free thermogenic fat burner in the world.

Thermogenesis is basically the natural process in which fat is burned to produce body heat.

ThermoGreen Tea's efficacy was reported in a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Unlike most conventional weight loss supplements, ThermoGreen Tea does not contain the ECA stack (ephedrine, caffeine, aspirin), which has adverse side effects. Especially when combined with caffeine sources, the ECA stack can have potentially harmful consequences in some individuals, particularly pregnant women and people taking prescription drugs or over-the-counter (OTC) medication.

Without ephedrine, ThermoGreen Tea has no dangerous side effects. It can benefit individuals sensitive to caffeine, ephedrine and aspirin. Unlike other weight loss supplements, it does not increase heart rate. Green tea has far less caffeine than black tea.

ThermoGreen Tea has, among others, 90 milligrams of epigallocathechin gallate (EGCG), an antioxidant (substances that combat disease-causing oxygen free radicals) found in green tea. The substance is said to be about 100 times more effective than Vitamin C and 25 times more effective than Vitamin E in protecting cells and DNA from damage that can lead to cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses.

EGCG is also supposed to give twice the benefits of red wine's health-enhancing resveratrol.

ThermoGreen Tea may be used everyday for weight maintenance. Its antioxidant properties help protect the body from pollution and the harmful effects of the environment.

When ThermoGreen Tea is taken continually for two to three months at a dose of 270 milligrams of polyphenols, at least 4.6 percent of total body weight may be lost without dieting.

ThermoGreen Tea capsules by Universal Nutrition is exclusively available at all Healthy Options store branches in Metro Manila, Pampanga and Cebu City.

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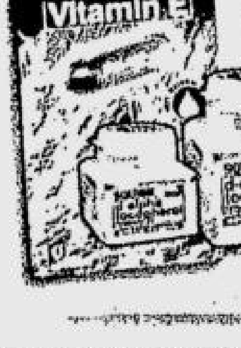

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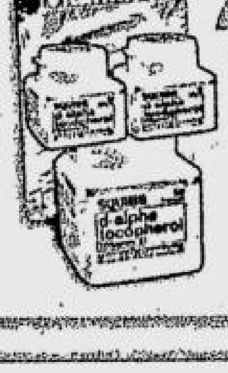

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A touch of Bollywood

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Black pepper, known as The Black Gold of India and widely prized in the ancient world, detoxifies and energizes, while also toning muscles and banishing fat. Bollywood also wears a jelly jewel bindi-style marking.

Lush is exclusively distributed by Stores Specialists, Inc. Lush boutiques are located at Glorietta 4, Power Plant Mall, Shangri-La Mall and Greenbelt 3. Visit www.lush.com.ph

BOLLYWOOD ballistic

Why children have to play

HEALTHTODAY discusses the role of play in a child's growth in its latest issue. The magazine says, by understanding how play makes kids whole, parents will realize how it made them better persons and good parents. A child at play can command things, build and take on roles.

Parents can also find out how to help their daughter through every woman's rite of passage without any awkwardness.

Adults can learn how to maintain the "child in you" by getting enough rest and recreation (R&R) to recharge their batteries. Mistakes, illness or inefficiency may be the bodies and minds' way of telling people that they need a break.

In this issue, Judy Ann Santos, former child star and one of the Philippines' biggest stars, discusses how she juggles her killer schedule and still finds time for her family and herself.

HealthToday also carries an exclusive report on the pending Patient's Rights and Obligations Bill.

The April issue of HealthToday is available in all bookstores, newsstands and retail outlets nationwide. Call 8860333 loc. 112 or e-mail enquiry.ph@asia.cmpmedica.com.

Standing up for the Filipino male

From page C1

wellness, particularly for men.

"The biggest challenge to male sexual wellness is mainly the cultural conditioning," he says.

Dr. Jose Sarenas, an internist-pulmonologist of the Manila Doctors' Hospital, agrees that the Filipino culture tends to put rigid restrictions on sex. "They tell men to park their genitals for a while," he quips.

SWIM hopes to break the culture of silence on sexual health concerns. Arnonobal encourages men to see their doctors when they have sexual issues. Exploring sexual inability might reveal other health concerns.

"Before buying sex-enhancing drugs, visit your doctor," says Arnonobal, who is also senior product manager of Levitra. He stresses that performance-enhancing drugs, like Vardenafil, need a doctor's prescription. A breakthrough product from Bayer HealthCare, Vardenafil has been found to heighten the orgasmic experience and significantly improve overall satisfaction in men.

But while performance-enhancing drugs have captured the public's attention, experts have said other issues concerning men's health and social well-being should also be addressed.

The Sexual Wellness in Men (SWIM) Foundation secretariat is at Unit 7C Tuscan Bldg., V.A. Rufino St., Legazpi Village, Makati City, tel. 8128828/8129199 and fax 7505426.

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AK503	CRK-BKI	11:40	13:40	Daily

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17:30	19:30	12:00	14:00

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PIOLO Pascual, in classic soccer outfit, adds a touch of star quality to Diadora.

BANDEAU and jacket for the stylish benchwarmer

COLOR combo in the most delicious shades

BASIC outfits get a splash of summer fun via canary yellow body bag.

With Piolo Pascual wearing its clothes, Diadora had the biggest crowd during the recent Fashion Week

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Coolest sportswear for hottest star

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Karl Sumbeling

WAS it the star or the outfits he wore? It was hard to tell because it was the hottest leading man who was wearing one of the coolest Italian sportswear brands to hit the Philippines.

Whatever their reasons, screaming fans packed the Glorietta Activity Center on Day 3 of the recently concluded Philippine Fashion Week to see Piolo Pascual in the flesh as he walked down the ramp several times wearing the latest outdoor and sports fashion from Diadora.

The show drew what was probably the biggest crowd during the 10-day fashion extravaganza. People jammed the one entrance to the venue minutes before the show. Other male and female models in Diadora separates preceded Pascual's every appearance.

Organizers, who were too eager to invite warm bodies, were caught flat-footed in their Diadora rubber shoes. They had to hastily add more seats to accommodate the record crowd.

Not a few media persons gave up trying to wade through the mob to get to the already occupied seats supposedly reserved for them.

Trendy

Judging from the clothes, though, the show would have been a hit with or without the brand's handsome, if a bit overexposed, star endorser. Diadora offered both serious athletes and stylish benchwarmers a full line of trendy and eye-catching apparel for almost every game and mood. Yes, even for tennis and swimming.

For conservative types, Diadora showed a full line of black and white pieces, from sweaters to hoodies, running shorts to jogging pants, rubber shoes to sports bags.

Layering

Forget the summer heat. Layering was still very much evident in Diadora's long-sleeved and clingy boleros that went well with cropped tees and tank tops.

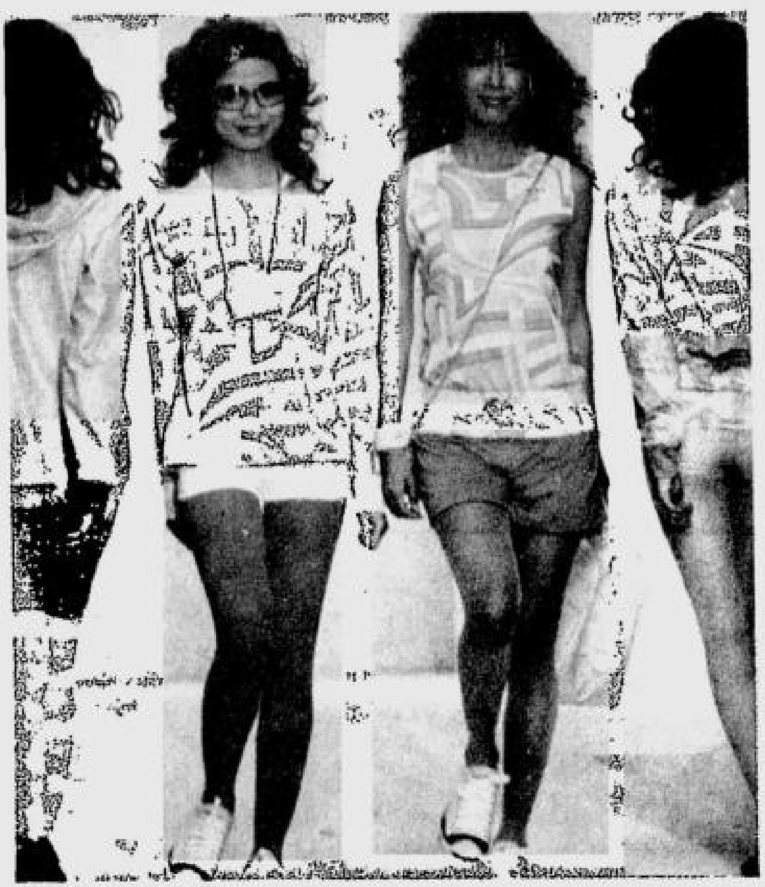
The brand also showed fitted sportswear in such tropical shades as orange, fuchsia, yellow, apple green and electric blue aimed perhaps at a younger, more adventurous market.

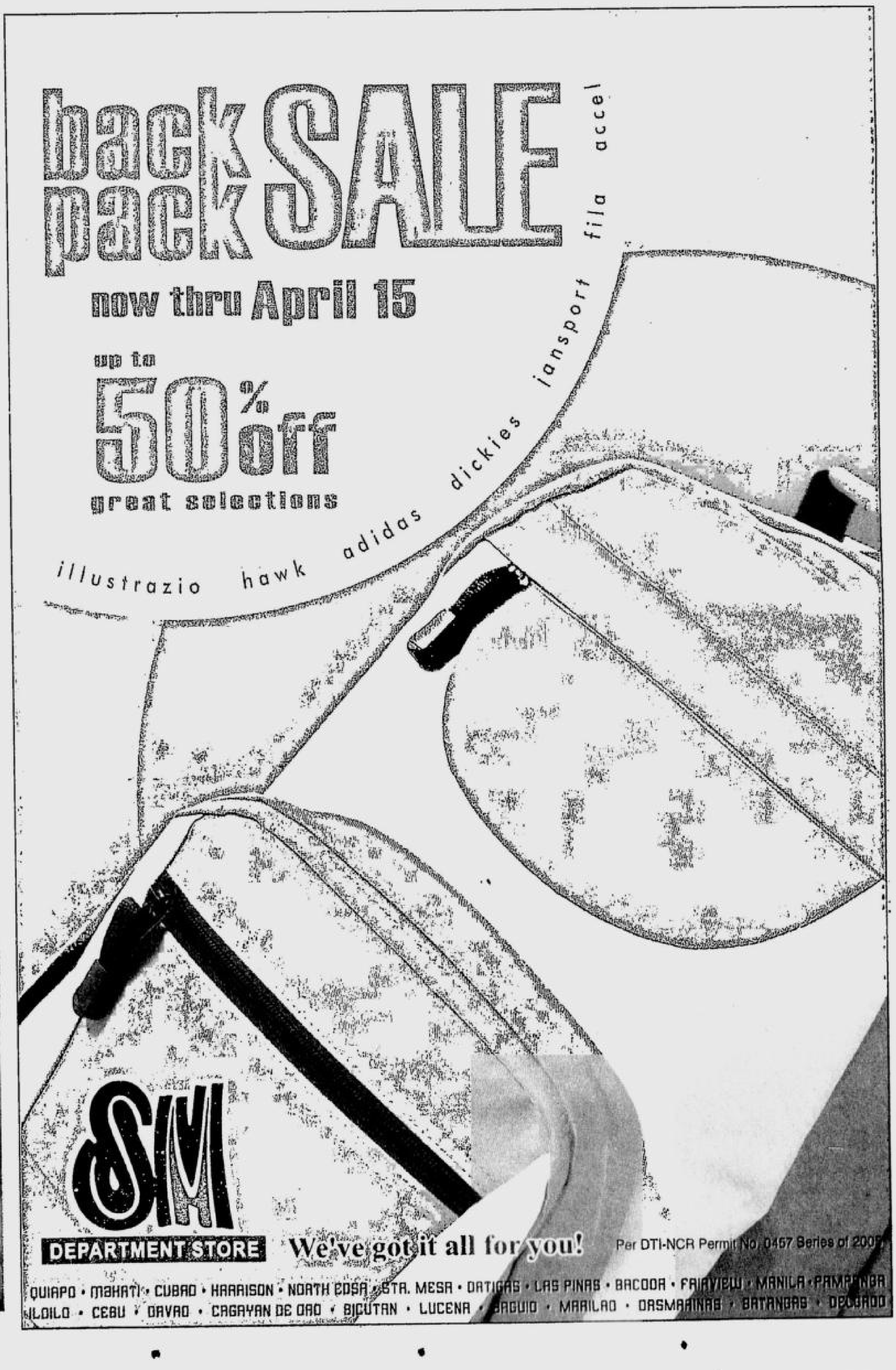
Not even more established brands carry such a range of colors. But what really brought the house down were printed outdoor wear in varying shades of green or hot pink for women. The collection, which was Pucci meets Lycra, proved sportwear could be glam and fashionable.

And like the more famous brand that asks its loyalists to "just do it," Diadora has reportedly also kept in step with the times with its own version of Dri-Fit. To put some spring into its shoes, the brand's designers have reinforced each pair with Axeller.

To increase its global cache, a number of jackets were emblazoned with the names of several countries from Europe and Latin America. It was probably no coincidence that several of these countries were well-known in the world of football.

The Philippines was not among those countries stamped on Diadora's apparel. But the crowd did not seem to mind as it lapped up every item that Pascual and company donned for the catwalk.


PUCCI meets Lycra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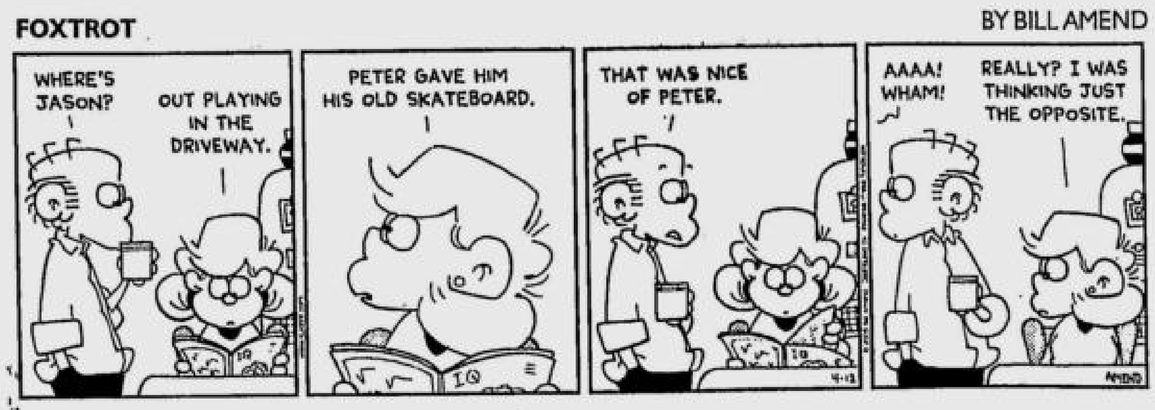
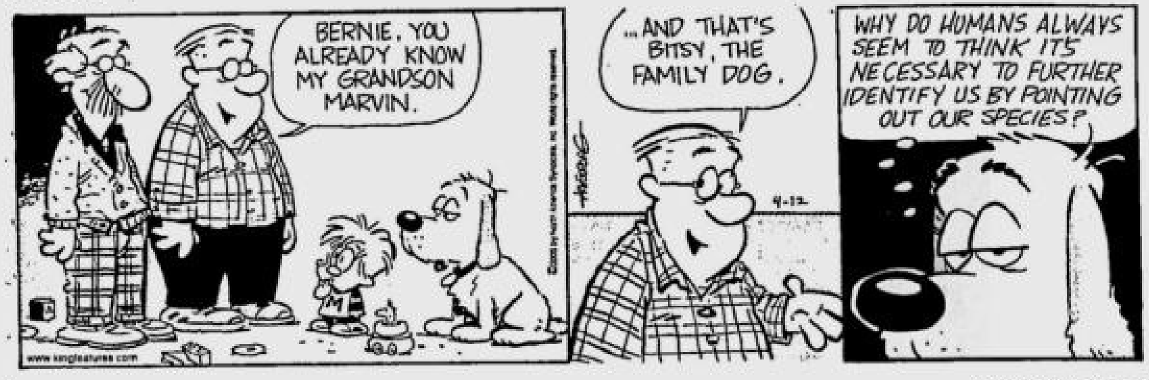
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHERE'S JASON?
OUT PLAYING IN THE DRIVEWAY.
PETER GAVE HIM HIS OLD SKATEBOARD.
THAT WAS NICE OF PETER.
AAAA! WHAM!
REALLY? I WAS THINKING JUST THE OPPOSITE.
4-12

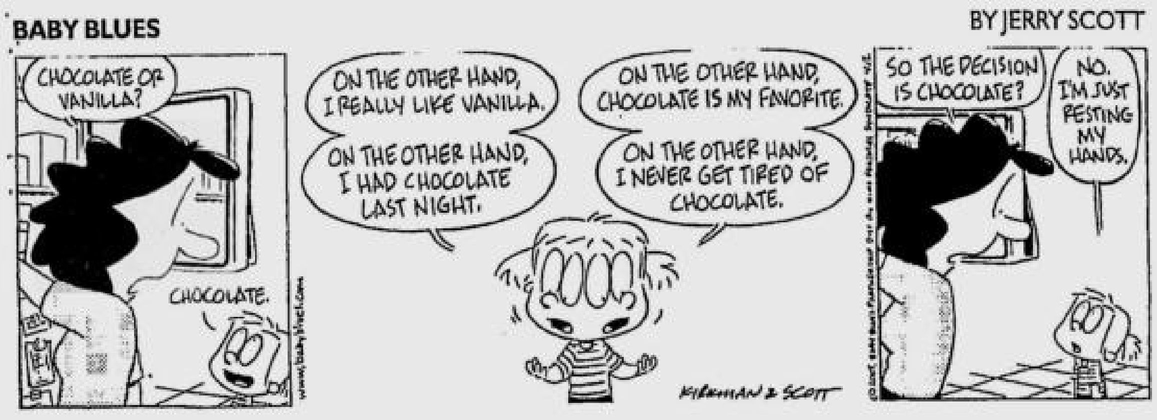
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


BERNIE, YOU ALREADY KNOW MY GRANDSON MARVIN.
...AND THAT'S BITSY, THE FAMILY DOG.
WHY DO HUMANS ALWAYS SEEM TO THINK IT'S NECESSARY TO FURTHER IDENTIFY US BY POINTING OUT OUR SPECIES?
4-12
www.kingfeatures.com

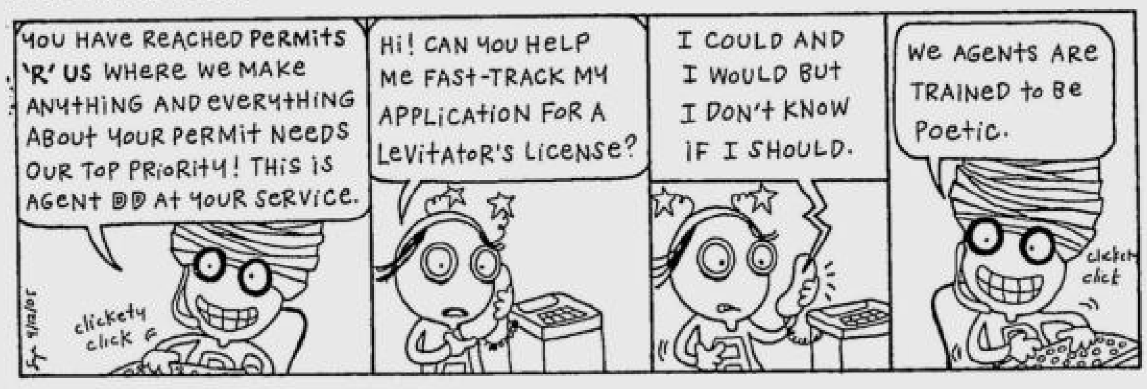
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CHOCOLATE OR VANILLA?
CHOCOLATE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I REALLY LIKE VANILLA.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAD CHOCOLATE LAST NIGHT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, CHOCOLATE IS MY FAVORITE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, I NEVER GET TIRED OF CHOCOLATE.
SO THE DECISION IS CHOCOLATE?
NO. I'M JUST RESTING MY HANDS.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

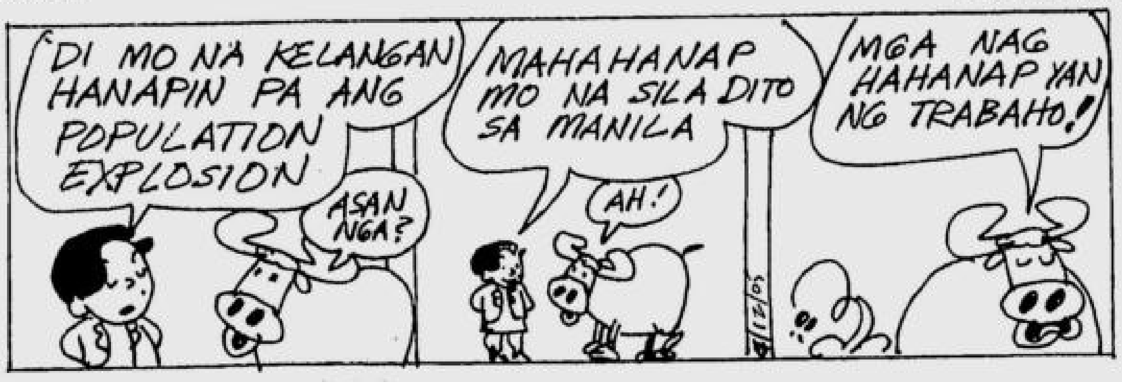
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOU HAVE REACHED PERMITS 'R' US WHERE WE MAKE ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING ABOUT YOUR PERMIT NEEDS OUR TOP PRIORITY! THIS IS AGENT DD AT YOUR SERVICE.
clickety click
Hi! CAN YOU HELP ME FAST-TRACK MY APPLICATION FOR A LEVITATOR'S LICENSE?
I COULD AND I WOULD BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD.
WE AGENTS ARE TRAINED TO BE POETIC.
clickety click

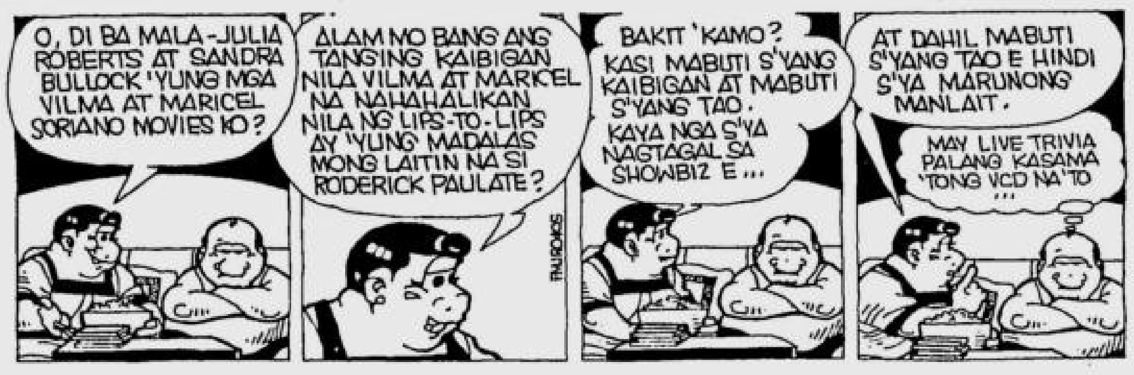
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


'DI MO NA KELANGAN HANAPIN PA ANG POPULATION EXPLOSION
ASAN NGA?
MAHAHANAP MO NA SILA DITO SA MANILA
AH!
MGA NAG HAHANAP YAN NG TRABAHO!

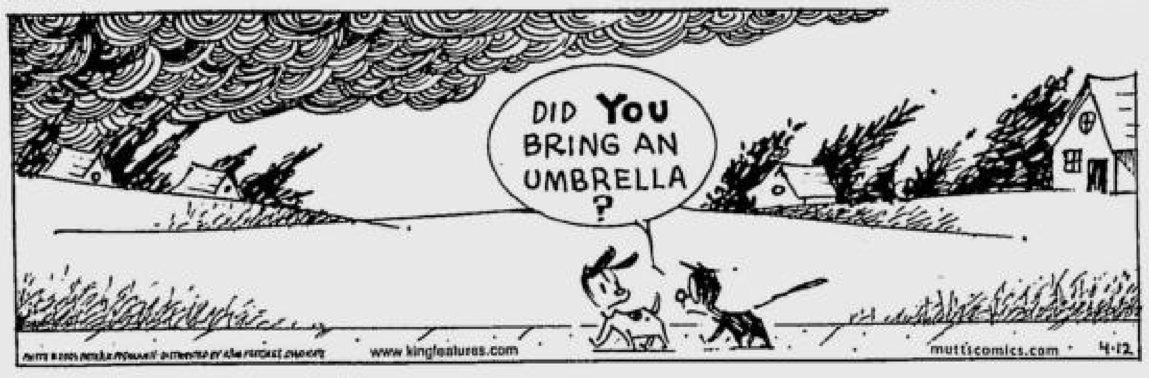
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O, DI BA MALA-JULIA ROBERTS AT SANDRA BULLOCK 'YUNG MGA VILMA AT MARICEL SORIANO MOVIES KO?
ALAM MO BANG ANG TANGING KAIBIGAN NILA VILMA AT MARICEL NA NAHAHALIKAN NILA NG LIPS-TO-LIPS AY 'YUNG MADALAS MONG LAITIN NA SI RODERICK PAULATE?
BAKIT 'KAMO? KASI MABUTI S'YANG KAIBIGAN AT MABUTI S'YANG TAO. KAYA NGA S'YA NAGTAGAL SA SHOWBIZ E...
AT DAHIL MABUTI S'YANG TAO E HINDI S'YA MARUNONG MANLAIT.
MAY LIVE TRIVIA PALANG KASAMA 'TONG VCD NA'TO ...

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


DID YOU BRING AN UMBRELLA ?
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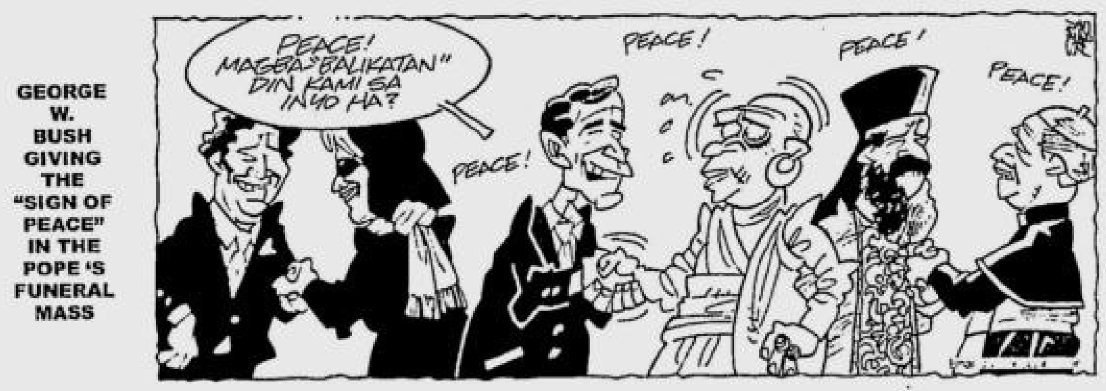
4-12

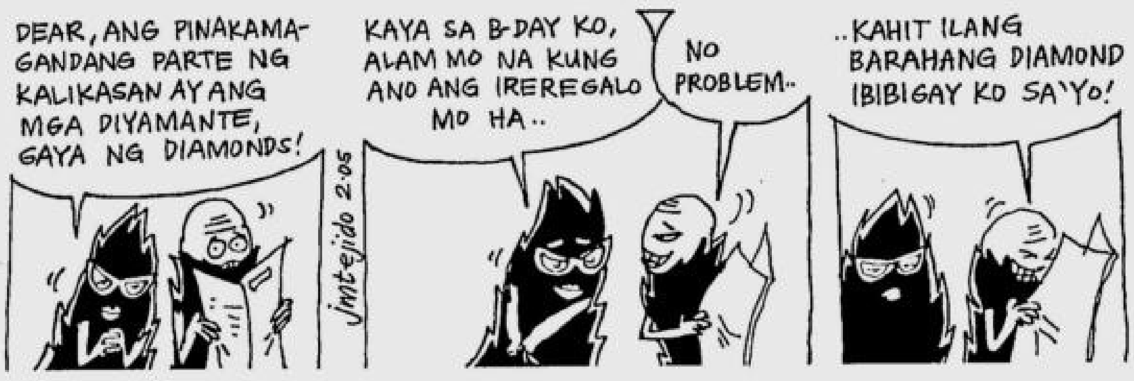
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


GEORGE W. BUSH GIVING THE "SIGN OF PEACE" IN THE POPE'S FUNERAL MASS
PEACE! MAGBA-"BALIKATAN" DIN KAMI SA INYO HA?
PEACE!
PEACE!
PEACE!
PEACE!

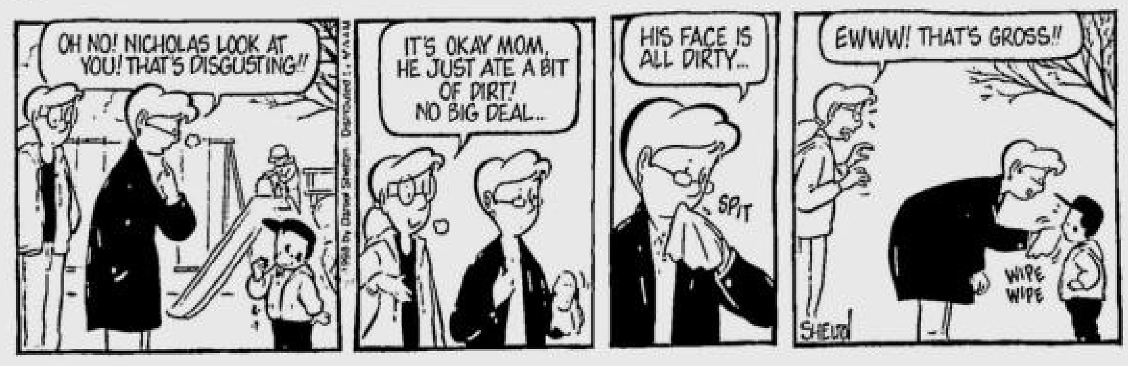
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


DEAR, ANG PINAKAMA-GANDANG PARTE NG KALIKASAN AY ANG MGA DIYAMANTE, GAYA NG DIAMONDS!
KAYA SA B-DAY KO, ALAM MO NA KUNG ANO ANG IREREGALO MO HA..
NO PROBLEM..
..KAHIT ILANG BARAHANG DIAMOND IBIBIGAY KO SA'YO!
jmtejido 2.05

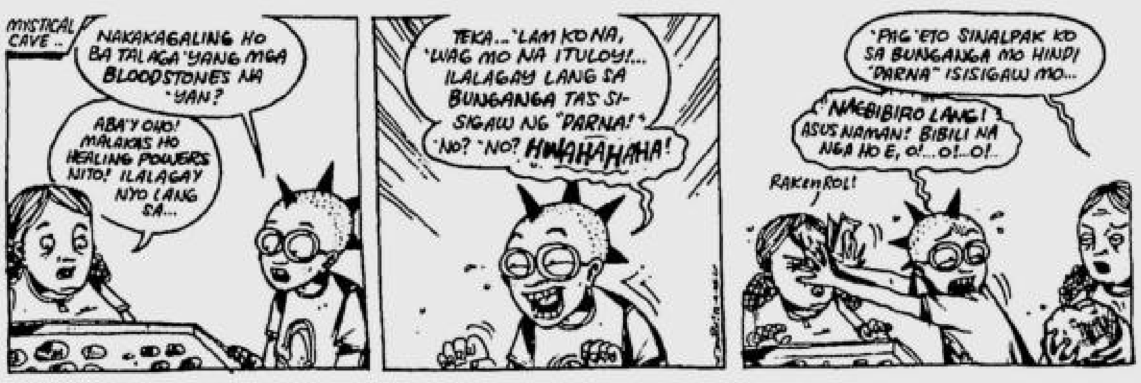
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH NO! NICHOLAS LOOK AT YOU! THAT'S DISGUSTING!!
IT'S OKAY MOM, HE JUST ATE A BIT OF DIRT! NO BIG DEAL...
HIS FACE IS ALL DIRTY...
SPIT
EWWW! THAT'S GROSS!!
WIPE WIPE
SHELTON

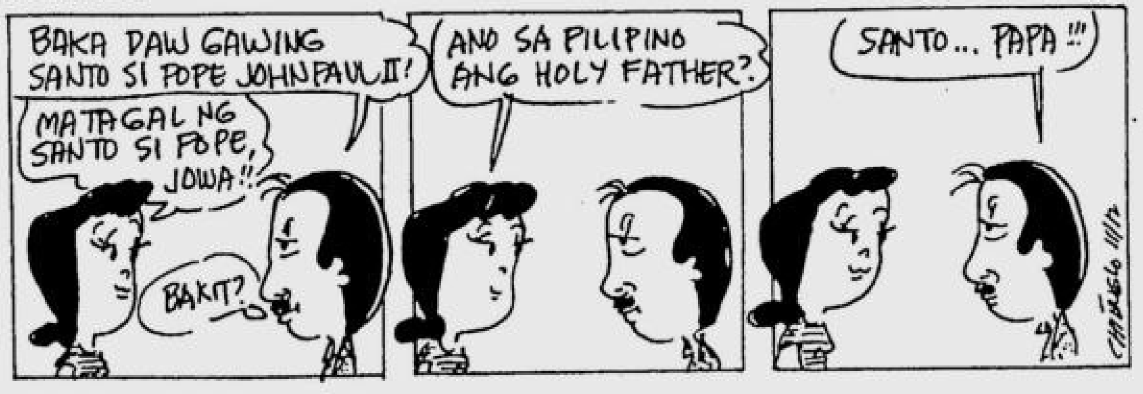
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


MYSTICAL CAVE...
NAKAKAGALING HO BA TALAGA 'YANG MGA BLOODSTONES NA 'YAN?
ABA'Y OHO! MALAKAS HO HEALING POWERS NITO! ILALAGAY NYO LANG SA...
TEKA... 'LAM KO NA, 'WAG MO NA ITULOY!... ILALAGAY LANG SA BUNGANGA TAS SI-SIGAW NG "PARNA!" 'NO? 'NO? HWAHAHAHA!
'PAG 'ETO SINALPAK KO SA BUNGANGA MO HINDI "PARNA" ISISIGAW MO...
NAGBIBIRO LANG! ASUS NAMAN! BIBILI NA NGA HO E, O!...O!...O!
RAKENROL!

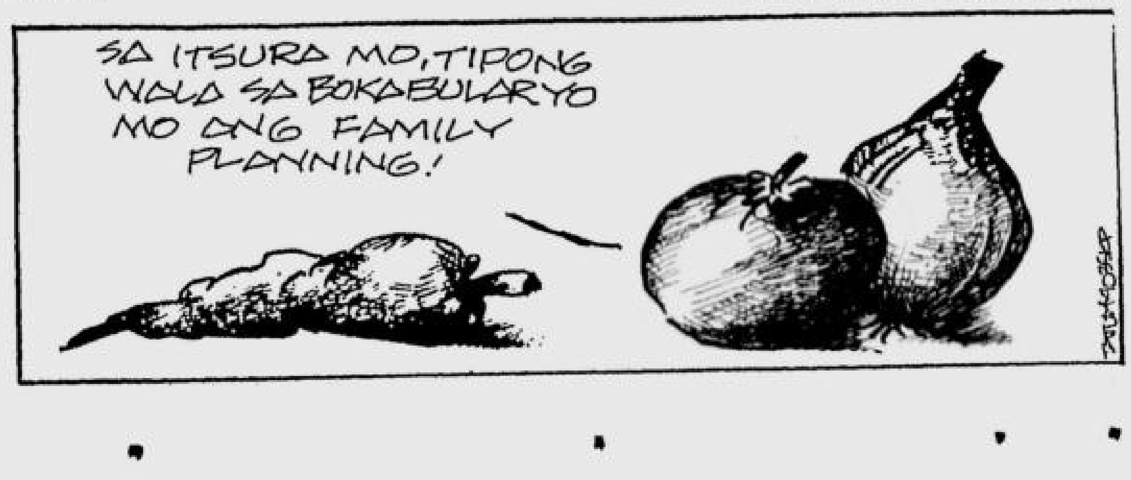
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BAKA DAW GAWING SANTO SI POPE JOHN PAUL II!
MATAGAL NG SANTO SI POPE, JOWA!!
BAKIT?
ANO SA PILIPINO ANG HOLY FATHER?
SANTO... PAPA!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SA ITSURA MO, TIPONG WALA SA BOKABULARYO MO ANG FAMILY PLANNING!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have strong verbal and diplomatic skills. You're interested in current events and the society around you. You have a sixth sense about tuning in to trends and social movements. You love to state your views to others. You work well with groups. This year will bring major changes, perhaps as significant as 1996. **Birthdate of:** Shannen Doherty, actress; Vince Gill, singer; David Letterman, TV host.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For the past three weeks, Mercury has been retrograde in your sign, causing confusion in all your communications and day-to-day activities. Thank heavens this is over!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Vague, uneasy feelings have made you doubt yourself lately. You can relax now. This influence is gone. Your confidence is returning; life is more normal.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): All kinds of friends from the past have contacted you recently. It's been a bit unusual. Now life seems to be back on track. It's all systems go!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): A number of things have made conversations with authority figures, bosses, teachers and parents a bit challenging lately. From here on, these relationships will improve nicely.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Delays in education, publishing and travel are now a thing of the past. Go forward in these areas with confidence. Hallelujah!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Recently, you felt bogged down in areas related to bills, debt, taxes and inheritances. Much of this is behind you now. You did what you could; now it's time to look forward to the future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Ex-partners and people from your past have kept you on your toes in the past few weeks. (It wasn't easy, either.) Fortunately, this is sorted out now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): All the confusion, delays and weird communications that frustrated you at work are now a thing of the past. (Whew!) Now you can look forward to just the normal amount of tricky stuff.

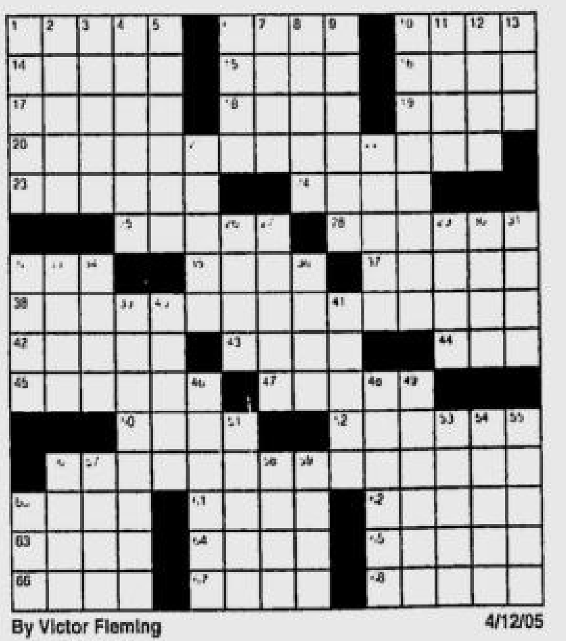
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Business with children (working with them, teaching them or taking care of them) now settles into a more predictable routine. Confusion and delays from the recent past are over now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You've been hung up with a lot of old family business in the past few weeks. From today onward, everything having to do with family, real estate and your home will function more efficiently.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It hasn't been easy lately! Car problems, transportation delays and confusion in all your communications have been frustrating. This is now history.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Definitely, checks have been late in the mail. Your money has been tied up in some way. These delays are over. You can relax. (This is the light at the end of the tunnel!)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Victor Fleming
Little Rock, AR

4/12/05

ACROSS
1 Engaged in battle
6 Railroad hitchhiker
10 Gillette razor
14 Alan Ladd classic
15 Author Haley
16 Unflappable
17 Tarnish
18 Last breath
19 Encryption
20 Double-play precluder
23 Deal in used goods
24 Salty seven
25 Quench
28 Intervene
32 Jolson and Hirt
35 Yup's antonym
37 Drunkard
38 Double jeopardy precluder
42 White poplar
43 Preliminary race
44 Neg. opposite
45 Fix potholes
47 Strainer
50 Former small import car
52 Exodus pharaoh
56 Double promotion precluder
60 Actress Gilpin
61 Winchester rival
62 Ouzo flavoring
63 Pathogenic microorganism
64 Chinese leader?
65 Renowned
66 Basilica area
67 Thumb through
68 Hank of hair

DOWN
1 Buzzing with activity
2 Clan chief
3 Homeless children
4 Potts and Lennox
5 Pass gossip
6 Arduous
7 Norwegian king
8 Poe poem, with "The"
9 Some daisies
10 Charge with
11 Chisel or hammer
12 Went for a spin
13 "Cakes and __"
21 Argentine plain
22 Dustin in "Midnight Cowboy"
26 Gary of golf
27 Fencing foils
29 Cheap books
30 Aoki of golf
31 Huey Lewis and the __
32 Hebrew month
33 Service station job?
34 Drain slowly
36 Morales of "La Bamba"
39 Kindergarten period
40 Musical show
41 Howard or Isaac
46 Escape hatch
48 Unoccupied
49 One-sharp key
51 Ol vision
53 Malicious ill will
54 Someone __ (not ours)
55 Burpee purchase
56 Chick's chirp
57 Makes mistakes
58 Gossipy Barrett
59 Not left out of
60 Org. of Couples and Toms

Monday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	M	P	S	■	D	O	O	M	■	E	R	S	T
A	B	O	R	T	■	I	R	M	A	■	R	I	T	E
L	U	N	A	R	O	R	B	I	T	■	A	N	O	N
■	■	■	L	O	C	K	S	T	E	P	■	G	A	S
S	C	R	I	P	T	■	■	■	O	R	N	A	T	E
E	L	O	N	■	O	P	U	S	■	A	I	L	■	■
R	O	U	E	■	P	E	N	T	■	T	H	I	N	G
U	S	N	■	C	I	R	C	U	I	T	■	E	A	U
M	E	D	I	A	■	L	A	P	P	■	I	V	A	N
■	■	O	C	T	■	F	P	E	E	■	N	I	C	K
D	E	F	I	E	D	■	■	■	C	A	N	O	P	Y
H	A	G	■	S	E	L	F	S	A	M	E	■	■	■
A	T	O	M	■	F	U	L	L	C	I	R	C	L	E
B	E	L	A	■	A	R	E	A	■	S	L	O	A	N
I	N	F	O	■	T	E	A	M	■	S	Y	N	C	S

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4/12/05

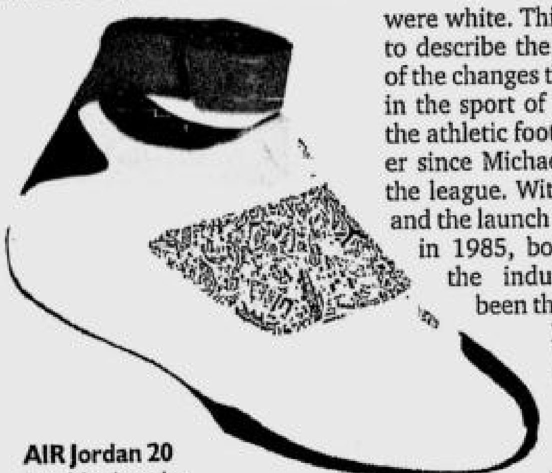
Sole classic

The new Nike Air Jordan XX is destined to take its place among the world's great athletic shoes

By Dexter Matilla
Contributor

HISTORY in the making. Perhaps that's the only way to describe the importance of the Air Jordan line not only in the market worldwide, but also in the consciousness of consumers for over two decades now.

Before the very first Air Jordan came to be, all basketball shoes were white. This fact only begins to describe the sheer magnitude of the changes that have occurred in the sport of basketball and in the athletic footwear industry ever since Michael Jordan entered the league. With Jordan's arrival and the launch of the Air Jordan I in 1985, both the game and the industry have never been the same.



AIR Jordan 20 in white/varsity red/black colorway

Each year, a new Air Jordan is born. With each model, the media, the industry and the buying public have met it with ever-increasing anticipation. People overseas would often camp out at their local shoe stores the night before the release of the latest Air Jordan shoe and pay retail just to be the first to own a pair.

Some would even purchase multiple pairs of multiple sizes, because they realize that the demand for such shoes are high and some people would pay more than double the retail price just to be able to own a pair.

Some, on the other hand, would simply buy two pairs of the same size, one to wear and one to keep as a spare. What other brand name has the ability to do that? None.

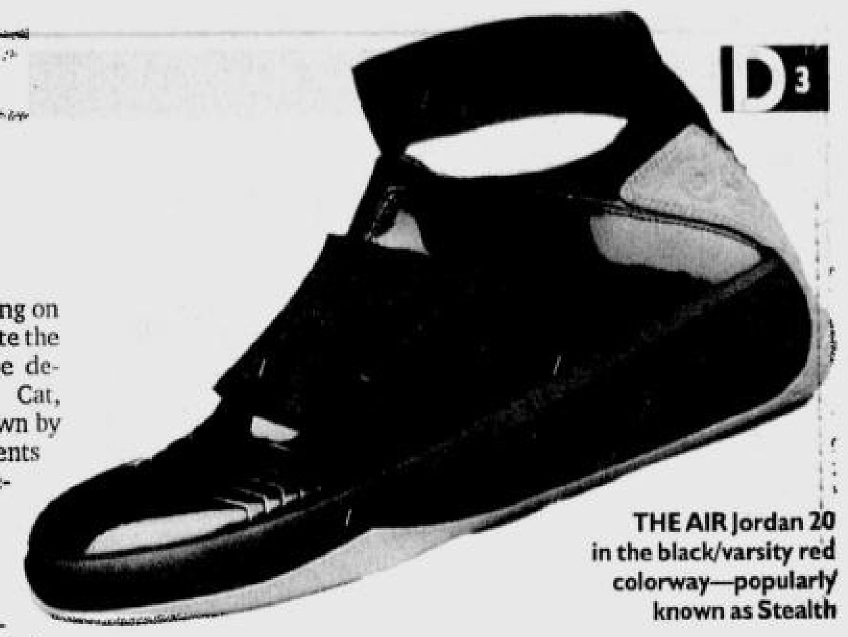
The release of the Air Jordan XX is another one for the record books. Designer Tinker Hatfield, the man responsible for the Air Jordan III to XV, is back. He was named one of the "Most Influential Designers" in Time Magazine's list of 100 Artists and Entertainers of the Century (1998) and has worked closely with Jordan himself to introduce the most innovative footwear for the most discerning athletes and consumers.

Various designs

The Air Jordan XX is made of full grain leather and nubuck upper with detailed laser etching on the midfoot strap to celebrate the history of the brand. Some designs include the Black Cat, which is how Jordan is known by friends and opponents throughout the league because of his ferocity on the court; Pops, which is how Jordan's father was known; a whistle in honor of Clifton Pop Herring, Jordan's high school basketball coach; the six-fingered hand to commemorate Jordan's six NBA championship rings; and a home plate symbolizing Jordan's minor league baseball stint with the Birmingham Barons.

It also has a hidden lacing system for a lock-down performance fit. The heel and ankle system offers customizable support, while the memory foam-backed collar lining cushions the foot. An asymmetrical toe cap offers durability in key areas to protect against toe-drag.

The midsole has an internal shank plate for midfoot and arch support. It also has a full-length fabric-wrapped Phylon midsole that houses a new Independent Podular Suspension (IPS) technology, developed exclusively for the Air Jordan XX shoe.



THE AIR Jordan 20 in the black/varsity red colorway—popularly known as Stealth

This system strategically places 20 IPS columns of varying density Phylon beneath key performance areas of the foot. Resting directly above the outsole, the IPS is positioned for maximum efficiency in compression and dispersion of shock and energy, enabling quick and responsive reactions to the highest performance needs of basketball. The 20 herringbone pods on the outsole celebrate the heritage of the Air Jordan shoe line.

The Air Jordan XX made its debut during the NBA All-Star Weekend in Denver last February, worn by Team Jordan members Quentin Richardson of the Phoenix Suns, sophomore Carmelo Anthony of the Denver Nuggets and Ray Allen of the Seattle Supersonics.

Locally, Nike Philippines made two colorways of the Air Jordan XX available to the public recently—the white/varsity red-black and the black/silver, more popularly known to shoeheads as the Stealths.

No doubt die-hard Jordan fans will snap up this latest model as part of their collections. For those who do not yet own a pair of Air Jordans, getting a pair of Air Jordan XX is the best way to start.

It celebrates the past and anticipates the future that symbolizes the excellence embodied on and off the court by Michael Jordan—the greatest player to ever play basketball.

BEING an athlete gives kids a reason to stay away from drugs, alcohol and other vices.

Health drink's summer sports clinic ongoing

IT IS never too late to let your child experience the many wonderful and long-lasting benefits that sports offers. Each year, Milo, with its legacy of building and breeding champions, conducts the Milo Summer Sports Clinics—a nationwide summer sports program that teaches children the basics of various sports in a fun, unique and scientific way.

Now on its 22nd year, the Milo Summer Sports Clinics will be held from April to May and features courses on badminton, basketball, bowling, chess, football, gymnastics, ice skating, karatedo, lawn tennis, muay, swimming, squash, table tennis, taekwondo, volleyball and wall climbing. With trained and experienced professionals supervising each course, your kids will surely reap the advantages of getting into sports, the right and enjoyable way.

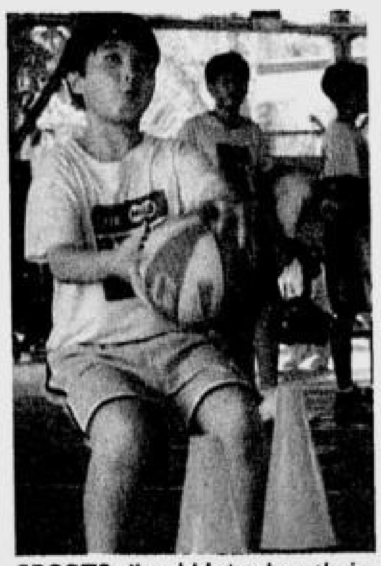
Getting kids into sports at an early age reduces the risk of chronic diseases. They also grow up to be more active physically and suffer less depression as they age. Establishing lifelong habits for good health is particularly important when a growing number of today's kids are becoming obese.

A sure-fire stress-buster, sports allow kids to clear their minds of academic and social pressures, letting them relieve tension.

Participating in sports has plenty of developmental benefits including increased self-esteem and self-confidence, healthier body image, significant experiences of competency and success.

Doing something well makes kids feel good about themselves. But equally important, it teaches them about the process of how to improve and work more effectively. Kids get a satisfying and enjoyable way to develop their own talents when they get into sports. Through personal effort, they become good at something they're interested in.

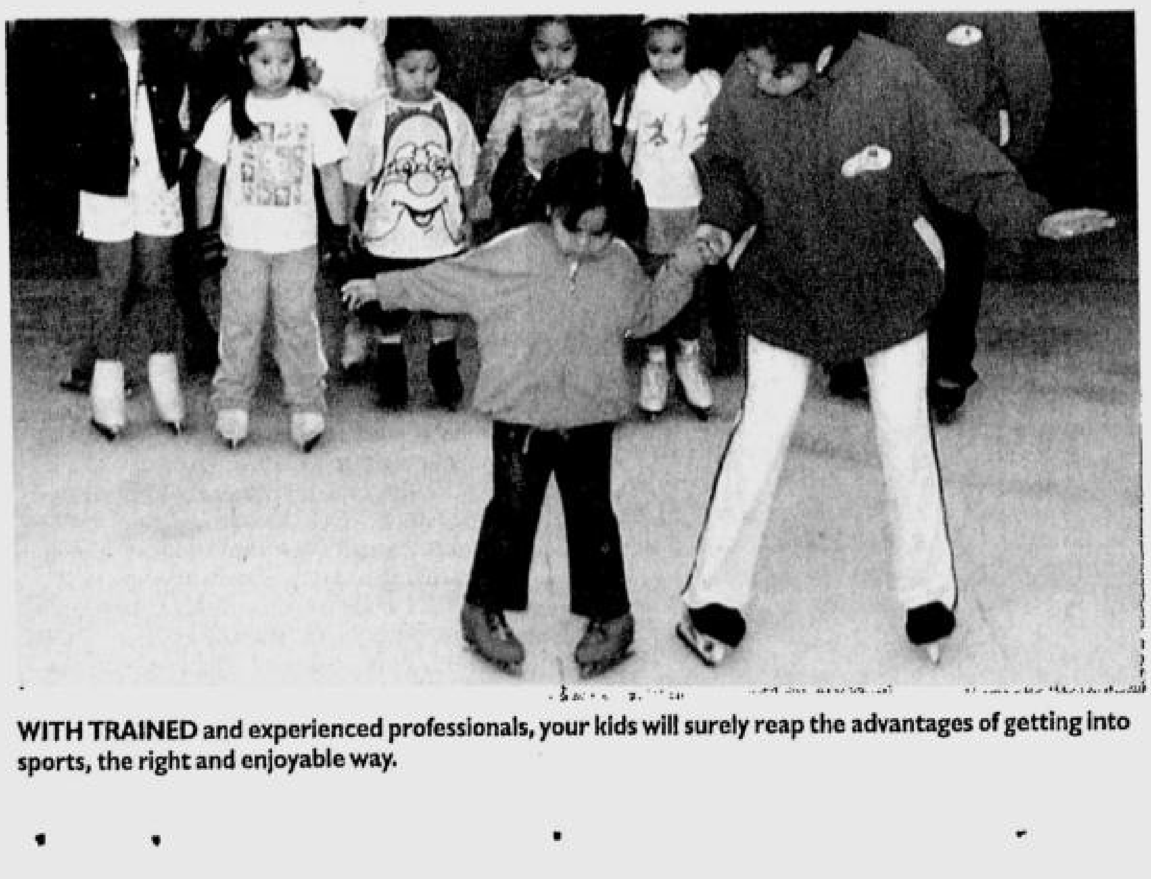
Sports also give kids an acceptable reason to stay away from drugs, alcohol and other vices. Most athletes value what their bodies can do and won't engage in activities that will compromise those abilities.



SPORTS allow kids to clear their minds of academic and social pressures, letting them relieve tension.

Aside from developing physical skills and getting the much-needed exercise, making friends and having fun, getting into sports will teach children to become team players, improve their self-esteem and help them develop proper values—benefits that will last them a lifetime.

Call 9147111.



WITH TRAINED and experienced professionals, your kids will surely reap the advantages of getting into sports, the right and enjoyable way.

Soap that rids body of toxins

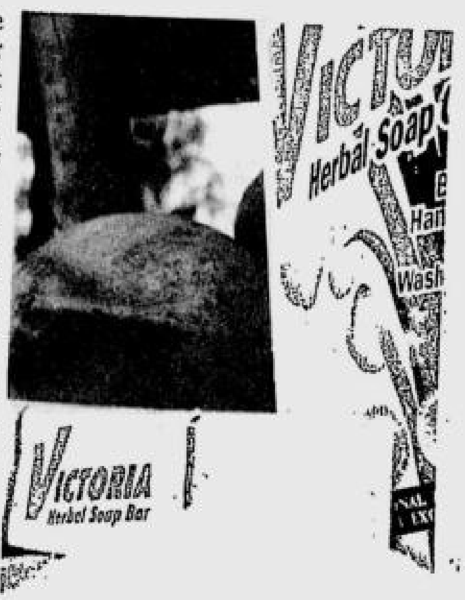
COCONUT oil has recently emerged as a health supplement of choice because it helps the body get rid of harmful substances, according to Dr. Rommel Tinio of the Health Asia Medical Clinic in Makati.

A proponent of Integrative Medicine or the combination of both Western and alternative medicine, Tinio explains that when taken orally, coconut oil contains both lauric and capric acid which have antibiotic, antibacterial, antiviral and antiprotozoal elements.

When it comes into contact with the skin, coconut oil is converted into sodium laureate "which the body can deal with," says Tinio. It does not clog up the pores unlike petroleum-based mineral oil. In addition, the lauric and capric acids in coconut oil—and all their accompanying benefits—are also absorbed by the skin.

Unfortunately, Filipinos have yet to make full use of coconut oil and its many byproducts despite its abundance in their midst. One particularly useful product is Victoria Herbal Soap Granules, which contains no inorganic chemicals. Manufactured by Daila Herbal Community Enterprises, the soap has been warmly accepted in the US and Europe because of the curative properties associated with coconut oil, its main ingredient.

Clothes washed with soaps made from natural products like coconut oil will not harm the skin, says Tinio. In fact, he advocates its use together with exercise and a diet that uses as little chemicals as possible. Decreasing our overall intake of chemicals—through what we eat, breathe and allow to come in contact with our skin—is a great antidote to many chronic ailments, including hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, ovarian problems and heart diseases.



Many detergents used to supposedly clean clothes contain harmful toxins such as Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS), the synthetic form of lauric acid used as a wetting agent that produces bubbles in detergents. It is the same ingredient used in making car and garage floor cleaners and engine degreasers.

Clothes, especially synthetic fiber, washed in detergents containing SLS can alter the electromagnetic polarity of the skin—either by repelling, changing or absorbing electric currents. If the skin absorbs more electric current, it is more likely to become irritated and inflammed, warns Dr. Tinio.

Victoria Herbal Soap Granules bagged the Grandprix as best foreign invention in the 5th East-West Euro Intellectual Exhibition of Invention in Bulgaria in 1997, a Special Award of Recognition at the 2nd Morocco World Exhibition of Invention in 1998, the Silver-Gild Medal Award at the 24th Salon International des Invention in Switzerland in 1996 and the Gold Medal at the Salon Mondial de l'Invention et de l'Innovation in Morocco in 1997.

Victoria Soap, distributed by Vitaliano Inc. (tels. 7281896 or 8336845) is available at Cost-U-Less Supermarket in Libis, Landmark Supermarket in Makati, all SM Supermarkets, Unimart Supermarket, Makati Supermarket, Cash & Carry Supermarket, Mercury Drug Stores, Shoppersville Supermarket, CVC Supermarkets, Stall 65 at Market! Market! and Karl Edwards Bazaar at The Fort.

Sleep is key to good health

DO YOU know that lack of sleep can actually age people prematurely and promote serious illness?

People often overlook the important contribution sleep makes to overall well-being. About one-third of life is spent sleeping, and quality sleep is as important as eating right and exercising.

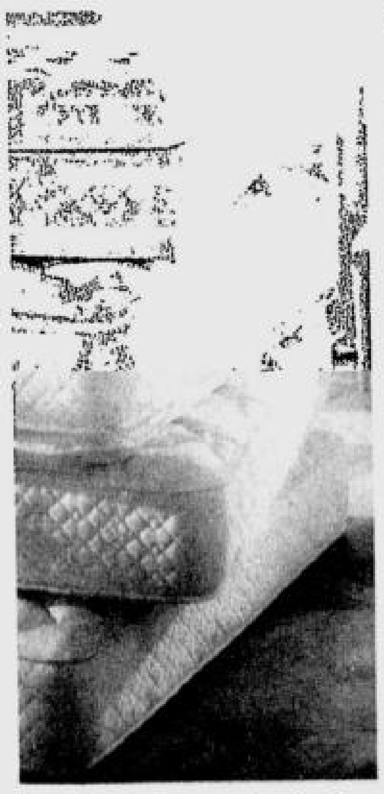
Every day should begin with a good night's sleep. Dr. James Maas of Cornell University says even minimal sleep loss can adversely affect mood, performance, productivity, communication skills and general health. Sleep deprivation can result in accidents and interfere with the proper functioning of the gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and immune systems.

Recent research has also discovered that a firm mattress is not always conducive to restful, rejuvenating sleep.

Tossing and turning on a mattress that does not offer proper pressure relief or correct postural alignment can cause fragmented sleep because the body will make adjustments as it tries to find relief.

Dr. William C. Dement of Stanford University's Sleep Research Center says fragmented sleep can be just as bad as no sleep.

During sleep, people should experience the same body alignment as though they are standing with good posture. Like the foot, the body has "arches" that need support during sleep. For the sleep system to provide proper alignment, it should support the body uniformly by "filling" all the different arches instead of forcing the body to conform to it.



If you sleep on your back, postural alignment is more critical than pressure. But if you sleep on your side, pressure relief is more critical than support.

At Ethan Allen, design professionals have the knowledge and information to help you determine what kind of sleep system your body needs. Ethan Allen mattresses have been developed through years of sleep research and feature: proper alignment to gently support the body and promote proper posture, allowing the muscles to relax for truly restful sleep; pressure relief with layers of polyester fiber, foam and thermally bonded fiber padding to provide a sleep surface that conforms to the body shape and allows for a more restful sleep; and coil-on-coil construction with innerspring units that are oven-baked, giving the components the "memory" that allows them to bounce back to their original shape more readily.

The exclusive thermally bonded fiber padding is allergen-free, odor-free and mildew-resistant. It contributes to the overall comfort and support.

Learn more about the different sleep systems at the Ethan Allen showroom along Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. Receive a special 20-percent discount this month on Ethan Allen beds and mattresses. Call 6348587.

Ethan Allen is exclusively distributed by Focus Global, Inc.

Avoiding calories when dining out

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

IF you are like most people, you have no problem making low-calorie food choices at home but have a hard time when you eat in a restaurant or a party.

You don't need a crash course on willpower. You just need to get smart. It's all a matter of planning, strategy and practical tips

Skip the bread rolls. Good food takes time to prepare so most restaurants have a waiting period of at least 15 minutes before your order arrives. As you wait, they give you a breadbasket with butter or olive oil on the side.

It's hard to say no when the bread is in front of you. But if you tell the waiter up front not to bring bread, you will save about 70 calories per small dinner roll, 140 for a big one, 35 calories per pat of butter (about one teaspoon) and 100 calories per tablespoon of olive oil.

Learn salad bar tricks

Many people opt for salad believing they are avoiding extra calories. But salad can be a high-calorie trap. Fresh vegetables are low in calories but dressings are not because almost all of them are made with oil or mayonnaise.

Always ask for the salad dressing on the side. Measure out a tablespoon. Either pour the entire tablespoon and toss your salad very well or keep the dressing on the side. Dip your fork in the dressing then spear your salad greens.

If you use the serving ladle, you can end up pouring four or five tablespoons of dressing (100 calories per tablespoon).

Use low-calorie salad dressing if available. Don't go overboard, though. Watch out for egg, tuna, or macaroni salad made with mayonnaise. Anything coated all over with mayonnaise is certain to pack a caloric wallop.

Be a finicky customer. Restaurants like nothing more than for you to return again and again. So don't hesitate to be a finicky customer. If you make your requests in a nice way, waiters and manager will be more than willing to accommodate them.

Check the menu thoroughly. Find out how vegetables are cooked. Are they smothered in butter? Can you have them without butter? Can they grill your pork chops instead of frying them (even if fried is the only thing on the menu)?

I have asked for chicken without the skin, cheese and broccoli soup with only half the cheese and paper napkins to soak up oil-laden but delicious churros.

Keep things out of sight, out of mind

Ask the waiter to remove the potato chips or French fries from your plate before it is served. Save yourself the hassle and have all tempting items removed. Ask for low-calorie sidings instead like steamed vegetables.

Stay away from fried or oily food. Many foods start out with low or moderate calories but become high-calorie items when fried. Potato by itself is relatively low in calories until it soaks up all the oil it is fried in. Baked potato starts out with few calories but is "corrupted" by butter or sour cream.

Always look for food that is grilled, baked, broiled, boiled, baked or lightly stir-fried.

Share the dessert. Dessert can be a healthy pleasure if you eat it infrequently and in moderation. Enjoy it without loading up on excess calories by sharing with a friend or two. Ask the waiter to divide the dessert in the kitchen so you aren't tempted to take more than your fair share.

Master doggie bag tips

Many restaurants now serve huge portions like American establishments. Unless you are sharing your meal, you may be tempted to finish everything on your plate.

If you have never eaten in a restaurant before or have not ordered the dish before, ask the waiter to show you just how big the portion is. Have him put half of it in a "doggie bag" to take home later before you even see your meal. Later may be too late. This only works when you are ordering à la carte. It is, obviously, inappropriate for a buffet or party.

Don't pig out at a buffet

Drop the "I've got to get my money's worth" mentality. Get small portions and take your time chewing and enjoying the food. This gives your brain time to tell your stomach that you are full and have gotten your money's worth.

Look carefully at the whole buffet before you fill your plate. Note what dishes may be high in calories. Anything fried, oily, creamy, saucy or starchy would be suspect.

ILLUSTRATON BY STPEH BRAVO

Ask yourself if there is any dish you would really like to eat. Get a small portion to satisfy your craving. Then fill your plate with moderate portions of dishes with less calories.

It is foolhardy to go to a buffet on a totally empty stomach. Eat something at home like an orange or an apple before going out.

If, in spite of all these strategies, you still pig out at buffets, then order à la carte or go to another restaurant that doesn't have a buffet. Running away from temptation is half the battle won.

Survive lunch or dinner parties. A combination of tactics mentioned is needed to survive a lunch or dinner party without filling up your fat cells. Eat something a little substantial but low-calorie at home. As you never know when lunch or dinner will be served at the party, you will literally devour the food if you are starving.

Eat small portions of favorite dishes. The goal is to enjoy the food and the company without feeling deprived or guilty the next day.

Alcoholic drinks can be high in calories. Drink in moderation or water down your drinks.

* * *

The Association of Fitness Professionals will hold a one-day fitness seminar on April 23 at the University of the Philippines Diliman Campus. Call 0917-5181202 or 9202762.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

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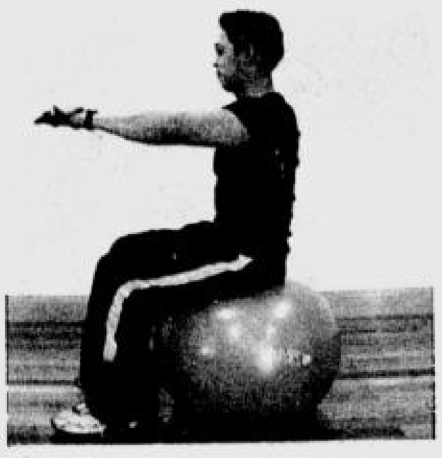
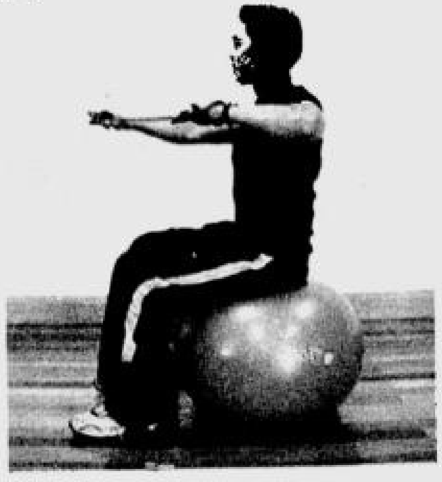
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK





Rubber band pullback on stability ball

THIS EXERCISE strengthens the muscles at the back of the shoulders and between the shoulder blades.

Equipment:

Stability ball (use a chair as a substitute or do the exercise standing) and rubber band (use imported exercise bands/tubes or substitute a 4-ft-long rubber band used for slingshots or tying pipes bought in the local market or hardware).

Exercise technique:

1. Sit on the ball with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Loosely wrap the ends of the rubber band around your hands until you have the right amount of resistance or tension.
3. Start with both arms in front of you. Keep elbows slightly bent.
4. Using your right arm as "anchor arm," pull backward with the left arm until your elbow is slightly past your shoulder joint.
5. Return to the starting position.
6. Do the desired number of repetitions on one side, then do the other.

Performance tips:

1. Keep your torso steady as you pull back with rubber band. Do not allow your waist to rotate.
2. Start the movement by contracting the muscles at the back of your shoulders and between your shoulder blades rather than just pulling with your hand.
3. Exhale as you pull back; inhale as you return to the starting position.
4. To increase the resistance, use two bands.

Repetitions:

Do 12-15 repetitions.

LIFESTYLE

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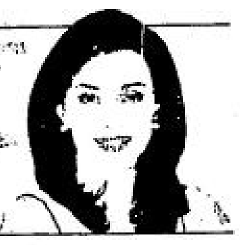
Life's one sure thing

INSIDE OUT



Cory Quirino

IT is said there is one thing certain about life—it is uncertainty.

Myth: Not everyone can cope with the stresses caused by uncertainty.

Fact: Everyone has a coping mechanism—one that allows for survival regardless of the challenges to be faced or tragedy to overcome.

While it is true that life's uncertainty makes stressful demands on one's coping mechanism, there is a technique to transform positively its destructive energies.

You have a choice

Face uncertainty with the knowledge that the choice is yours.

Acceptance—Allow the events to happen and unfold around you without fighting them or attempting to suppress them. This healthy approach gives way to the stressful situation and allows it to clear itself just as soon as it occurs.

Resistance—This means going against the flow by trying to change the stressful event from what it really is. But this unhealthy approach allows for frustration, false expectations and unfulfilled desires.

Emotional freedom

The state of stored-up feelings is called emotional debt. This is according to noted psychiatrist Dr. David Viscott in his book "Emotionally Free."

You are in a state of emotional debt when you are pessimistic, depressed about your situation by clinging to the past, fearfully insecure about the future, yearning for more affection and caring for someone who is no longer in your life, looking to the past for strength and love you cannot find in the present.

People who are in emotional debt place undue pressure on themselves. Inevitably, the situation hastens the aging process. To be in a constant state of emotional debt will lead to premature sickness and death.

Viscott says, "You can speculate, you can lament, you can yearn, but as much as you may wish to return and round off your emotional experience, you can never go home again. Your real home is in this place at this time. The present is for action, for doing, for becoming and for growing."

What to do: Allow the spontaneity in.

- Permit the unknown to take place. Welcome it as an opportunity for growth.
- Release the fear of change. By letting go of your fear, you neutralize stress.

Visualization

Imagine yourself riding on the roller coaster of life. You can hold on tightly in panic or enjoy the ride. You can scream with terror or exhilaration. You can consider the ride a misadventure or an adventure. If you panic, your body will release stress hormones. If you simply let go, your body will release "feel good" hormones.

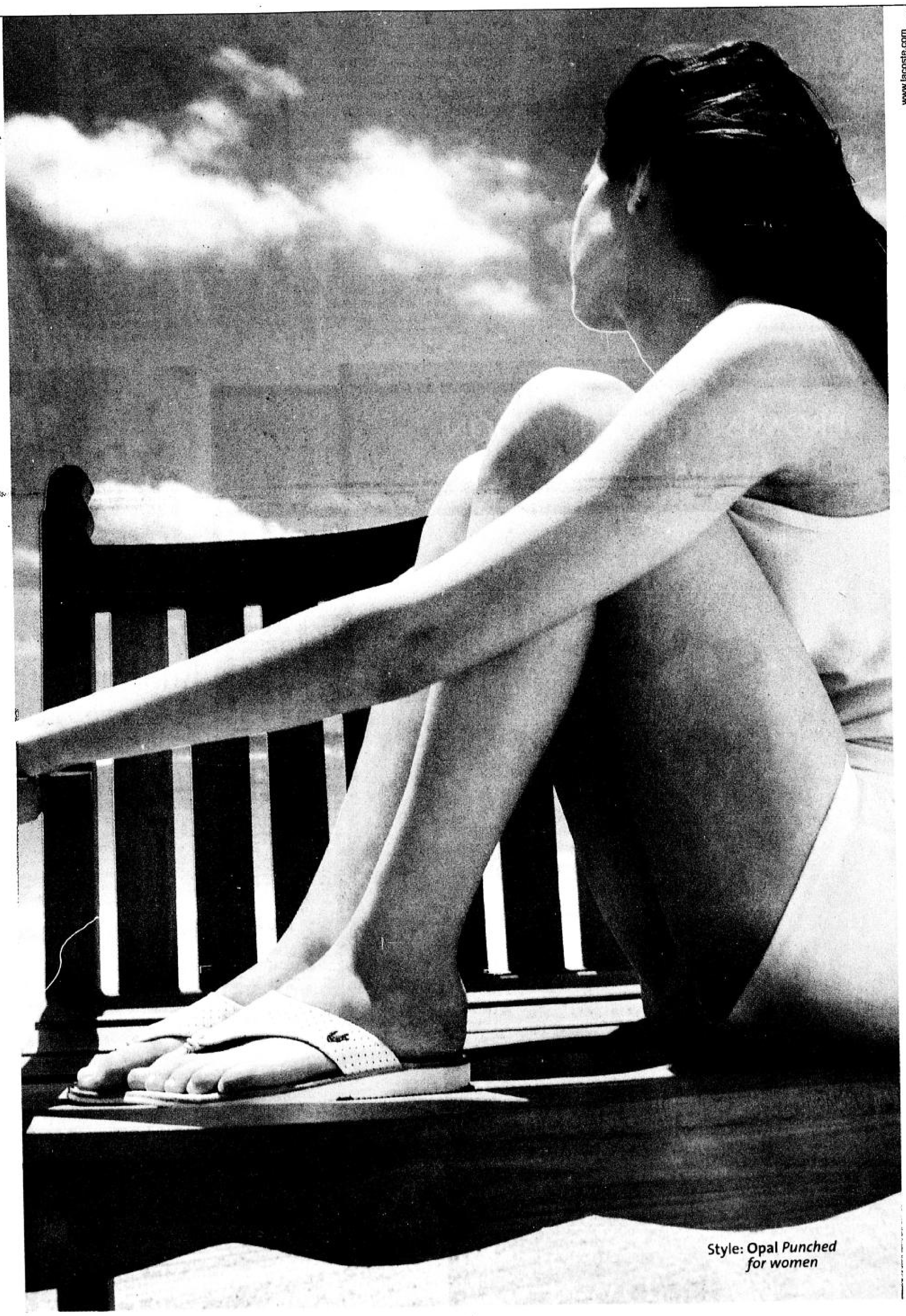
Surrendering exercise

In a bath tub of warm water, a pool or open beach, allow yourself to float freely. (If in a tub, add aromatherapy oils and candles.) Imagine you are looking at the limitless expanse of sky, watching the clouds change shape. You and the cloud are one—beautiful yet changing with the direction of life's winds. Affirm to yourself, "I am open to the present and to tomorrow."

Love and light!

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

While uncertainty causes stress, you can transform its destructive energies into something positive



Style: Opal *Punched for women*

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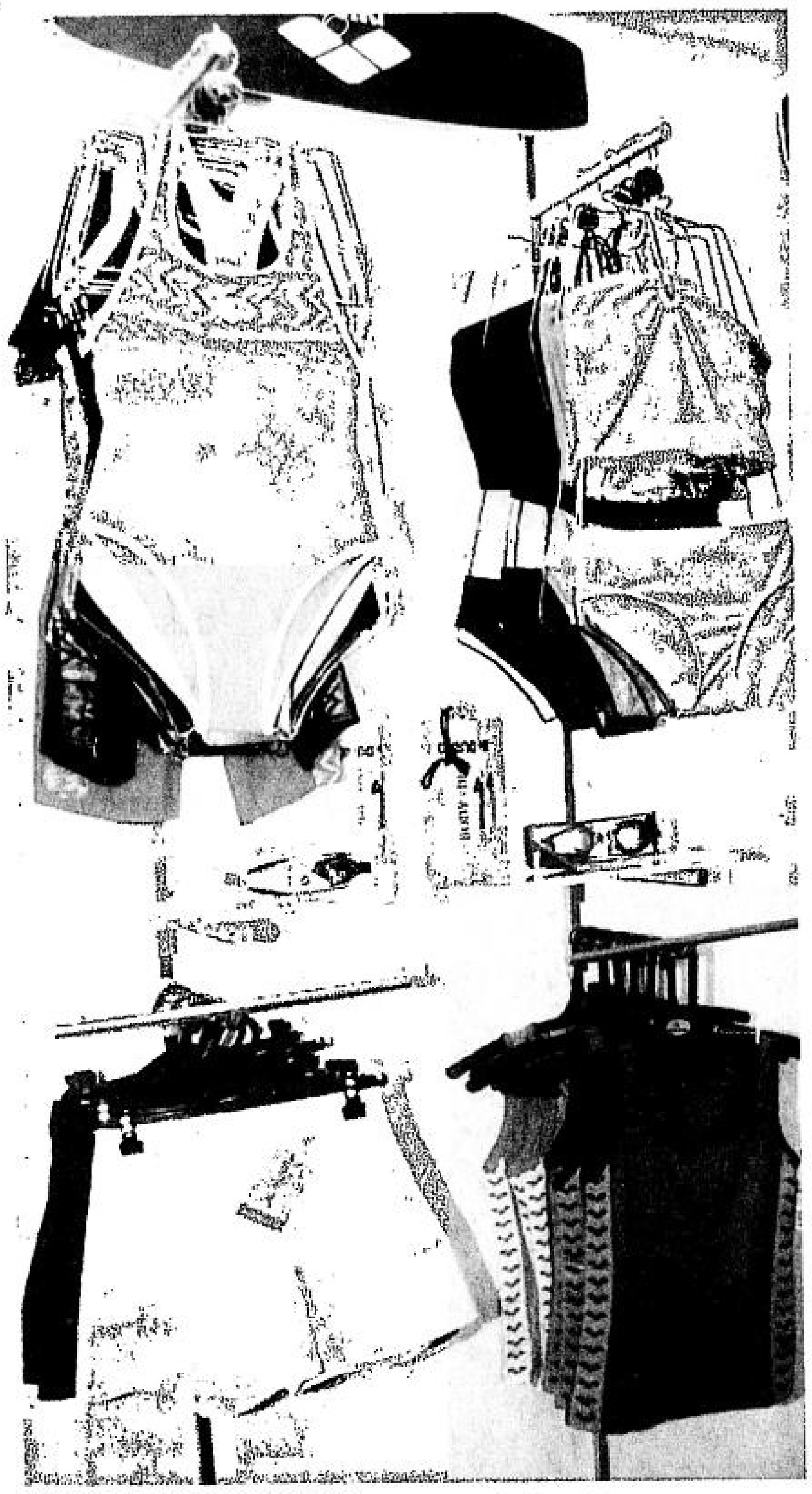


COLORFUL swimwear by Arena

FREE throw shoot out. Patrick Fran, Allan Salangsang and Asi Taulava receive their awards from Sportscentral's Philip Go, Vic Caridad and Rodel Mercado.

A sporty opening

SOME of the country's top basketball players, sports gear company executives and enthusiasts attended the opening of the new Sportscentral store at SM Megamall.

Giñebra's Allan Caidic cut the ribbon formally opening the store with celebrities Mandy Ochoa and Dino Guevarra, and Sportscentral's Philip Go.

The University of Santo Tomas' cheering squad performed afterwards.

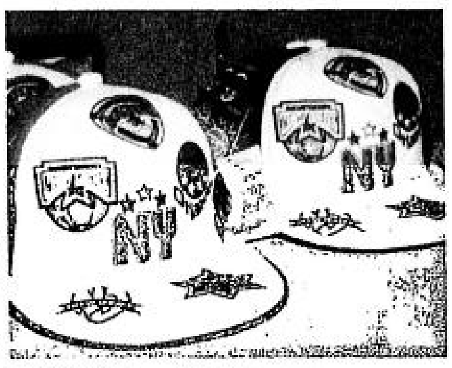
Guests included basketball players Allan Caidic, Migs Noble and Estong Ballesteros of Giñebra; and Asi Taulava, Patrick Fran and Allan Sanlangsang of Talk 'N' Text. Philippine Basketball League players present included Ian Garrido, Christian Guevara, Nestor David and Nino Calaneta.

Also there were Talk 'N' Text coach Harry del Rosario and assistant coach Virgil Villavicencio,

Welcoat's coach Caloy Garcia, assistant coach Jay Legacion and assistant team manager Boy Lapid.

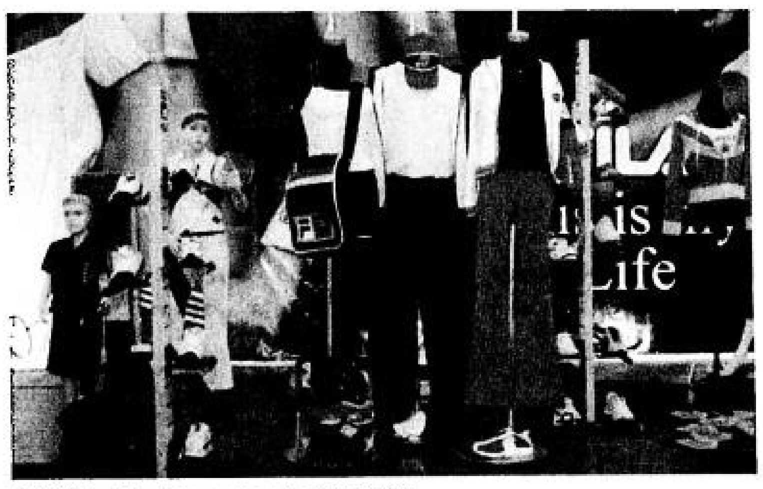
Ricky Victoria of Fila, Babes Galang of KSwiss, Willy Ortiz of Accel, Jocelle Te and Angel Souza of Nike, and Zsa Faminialagao of Sandugo were there to check the display areas for their respective brand's latest selections.

Sportscentral, which has the latest and most complete range of footwear, apparel and accessories, is at 2/L, SM Megamall, Building A.



TRENDY New York Pro caps

COOL jersey and shoes by Fubu



FILA'S spring/summer collection 2005

Brand-new colors, innovative technology

FILA, the most dynamic and high performance brand of sportswear, gives you no excuse to look sloppy.

With the company's goal to continually evolve and stay in fashion, the brand gives athletes that winning look, no matter how hard the challenge or how intense the game is.

Fila endorsers Kim Clijsters, Svetlana Kuzoetzova and Jennifer Capriati are living proof of this.

The company that specialized in knitwear when it was established in 1911 in Biella, has kept its reputation for high quality despite its more diverse products.

Fila apparel are designed with the brand's five values in mind—*vero* (true), *audace* (bold and daring), *innovativo* (innovative), *elegante* (elegant) and *unitario* (one).

This year, Fila's 2005 Spring-Summer Collection introduces a line with brand-new colors and new, innovative technology as the basis of the concept "Ill Lusso Nello Sport," which means the coming together of art, passion and sports.

The collection, dominated by Fila's trademark colors of navy blue, red and white, incorporates bright and pastel hues for a younger and bolder look to go with the continually changing and fast-paced world of fashion.

New designs for the men's wear collection are in black and gray and, for the women, blue, green, yellow and pink. New shades of each color, and mixed and matched color schemes are also available.

Fila's latest footwear line features the best in technology, with comfort and fit as the primary concern without forgetting the vintage and retro themes of the line. For this season, the brand brings back outsoles laced with Fila 3A and Evergrind technology. Introduced in the new line is Super Action, Fila's brand-new technology, that enhances cushioning and energy return for the wearer. Tennis enthusiasts can enjoy the Fibertech material that gives three times more grinding and wear and tear endurance.

The line is designed to cater to both the serious sportsperson and ordinary buyer, as shoes are versatile enough to be worn just about anywhere.

The Fila Spring-Summer 2005 collection presentation was directed by Rem Zamora, styled by Angelo Villanueva and organized by Ana Bitong.

COLORS for women in the new collection include blue and yellow.

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A family that plays together

ALBERTO and Jean Agra have passed on their love of tennis to children Jessica and Noel, who are now rising stars in Philippine sports.

THEIR love of tennis is allowing the Agra family to reap its benefits as a wholesome, fun, and exciting activity.

Alberto Agra, 41; his wife Jean, 42, and their children, Jessica, 13, and Noel, 11, are all avid tennis players. They are also loyal Prince racquet users.

The couple's interest in the sport started while they were still teenagers. After they had children, they passed on this passion to their children, who are showing potential as future stars of the sport.

Jessica is currently the number one female player in the country in the 14 under category. Brother Noel is ranked number three in the 10 under group.

Tennis has become a major bond for the Agra family, aside from other interests like movies, music, malling, eating out, and playing computer games.

"I think we are closer as a family because of tennis," says Alberto, president of Futures Tennis Scholarship Foundation. "Every member of the family is a good athlete and they (the children) grew up with tennis. It's a great feeling knowing that we share a family bond and a common interest that we hope to enjoy doing for a long time."

On court, they always "want to play their best." They credit their "weapons" on the court—Prince racquets—for their skillful play.

"I started playing tennis one summer in high school, but I only played regularly since 1993," says Alberto. As a member of the Metropolitan and Rockwell Club, he plays tennis three to four times a week despite his busy schedule as a local government lawyer and professor of law at Ateneo de Manila University. He considers his power forehand and heavy backhand slice as his "strengths" on the court.

Alberto uses the Prince Thunder 820. "I can't imagine using any other brand. Prince has always been known for its high-quality, innovative racquets that make us feel like we're world-class players," he says.

Jean, who started playing at 18, is currently a member of the Metropolitan Club, Rockwell Club, and Whirlpool Ladies Team. She keeps a full schedule as a financial consultant at PhilamLife, a member of the International Association of Registered Financial Consultants, and manager of Lim's Folding Furniture, mother and active tennis player.

She has used only Prince racquets since she started playing tennis. Like her husband, she currently uses a Prince Thunder 820 racquet.

Both parents hope their kids will become world-class tennis players, while being well-rounded individuals.

"I want them to excel in their studies even if they pursue a tennis career," Jean says.

The Agra couple encouraged their kids to take up the sport at a young age, hiring coaches Domeng Feliciano and Luisito Hipolito to give them professional training.

At 10, Jessica beat both her Dad and Mom. The last time the family played doubles, the pair of Dad Alberto and Mom Jean lost to Jessica and Noel. Alberto and Noel then lost to Jean and Jessica.

Jessica started at age six in a summer camp with Coach Domeng. She has joined a number of local and international tournaments. Mom Jean accompanies her when she competes abroad.

"The whole family goes to the matches if the schedule permits," Jean says. "We always support each other."

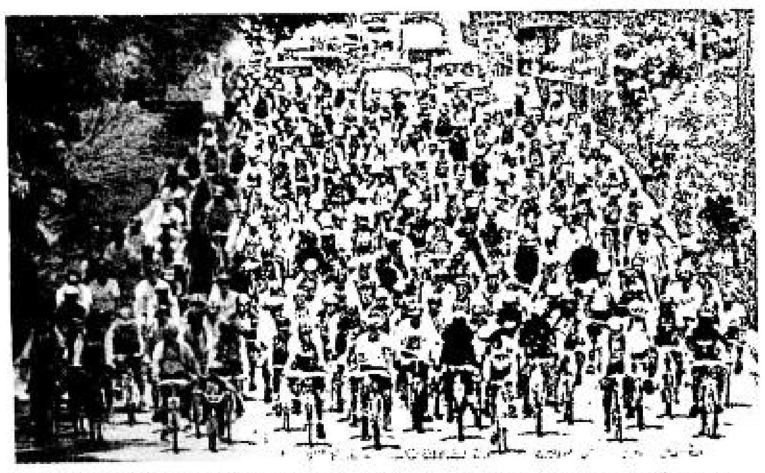
Jessica says, "When they come to watch, it makes me want to play so much better. I love seeing my family and friends cheering me on. It's such a motivating feeling."

She executes her lethal shots on the court, particularly power forehand and volley, with a Prince More Control DB 850 racquet. She plays six times a week as a member of the Metropolitan Club, Rockwell Club, and Colegio San Agustin Grade School Team.

Young Noel, who has been hitting tennis balls since age five, is also participating in a summer camp with Coach Domeng. Like his sister whom he idolizes, along with Andy Roddick, he is a member of the Metropolitan Club, Rockwell Club, and Colegio San Agustin Grade School Team. His power forehand, developed at a young age, is honed with his Prince Airdrive B900 racquet.

"I would watch my dad, mom and sister play and I would want to be like them. We all have fun when we play together. My parents and sister teach me some techniques and always encourage me to do my best in everything I do," Noel says.

"It's wonderful to watch our kids play and make impressive achievements," says the proud Dad. "As long as the kids are having fun, we're happy for them. We hope they win each time, but we just want them to be happy when they are on the court."


THE Seventh Tour of the Fireflies, which promotes less use of cars and more pedal power, will be held on April 17.

Fireflies return this Sunday

THE FIREFLY Brigade will hold the 7th Tour of the Fireflies on Sunday, April 17. This year's theme is: "*Maki-Bike Ka! (Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, bisikleta ang kailangan)*."

The tour will start and end at the Palma Hall (formerly Arts and Sciences) parking lot of the University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City.

On-site Registration begins at 5:30 a.m. Ride starts at 7 a.m. and ends at about 12 noon.

Bikers will go from Quezon City, San Juan, Manila, Quezon City and Caloocan before going back to Quezon City.

The 50-km ride will take about 3.5-4 hours to complete at a speed of 12-15 kilometers per hour. Coordinators will make sure everyone, including occasional riders, young children and senior citizens, can enjoy the tour.

The tour will make several short stops along the route so the caravan can re-group.

A Support and Gear (SAG) van will trail the riders. Those who need to rest, or are unable to continue cycling, may ride in the van.

All participants must sign the Waiver and Quit Claim in the registration form. They should wear helmets and bring their own water to drink. Children below 13 years old must be accompanied by a registered adult participant.

The P50 registration fee will help the Firefly Brigade conduct advocacy activities such as organizing the annual Tour of the Fireflies, arranging World Car-Free Day rides, and teaching safe urban cycling through bike clinics.

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Carrot juice is also rich in Vitamins B1, B2, C and E, and several minerals.

Beta carotene is present in many fruits and vegetables. The body changes beta carotene into Vitamin A, which helps promote good eyesight, healthy pregnancy and cellular growth.

The remaining beta-carotene is used by the body to power up the immune system, and acts as an antioxidants that fights disease-causing free radicals.

On the other hand, Vitamin A supports important body functions. It affects the formation and maintenance of the skin, mucous membranes, bones, and teeth. Vitamin A is also involved in the production of a chemical called visual purple, that helps people see in dim light.

Known as the anti-infective vitamin, this nutrient helps protect the body from infection. It keeps body surfaces healthy so they can act as barriers against harmful micro-organisms.

Phytochemicals, which are abundant in vegetables, fruits, and nuts, are natural compounds that help slow down the aging process and reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, cataracts, osteoporosis and urinary tract infections.

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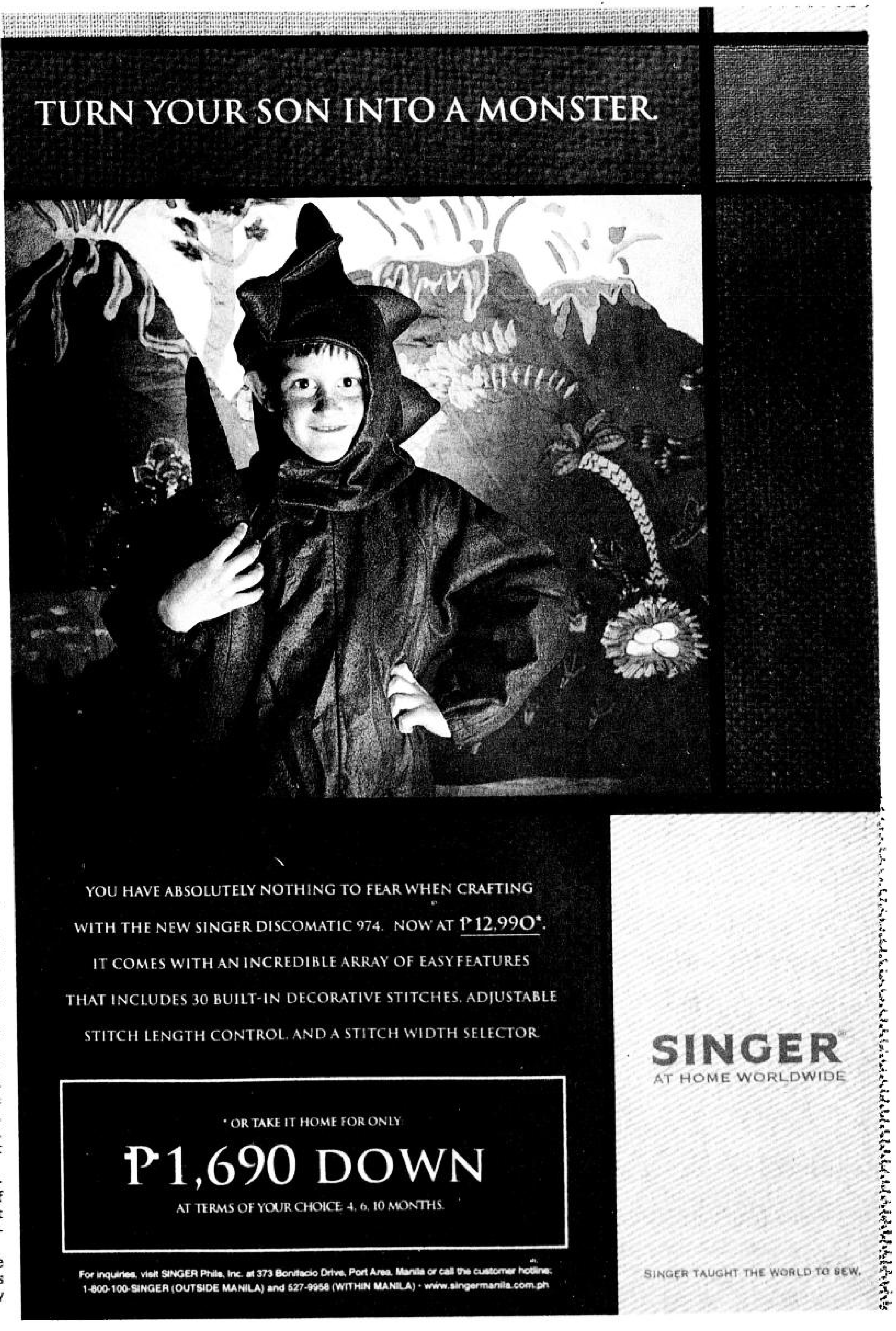
Pokka Carrot Juice is available in leading supermarkets and is exclusively distributed by Benby Enterprises.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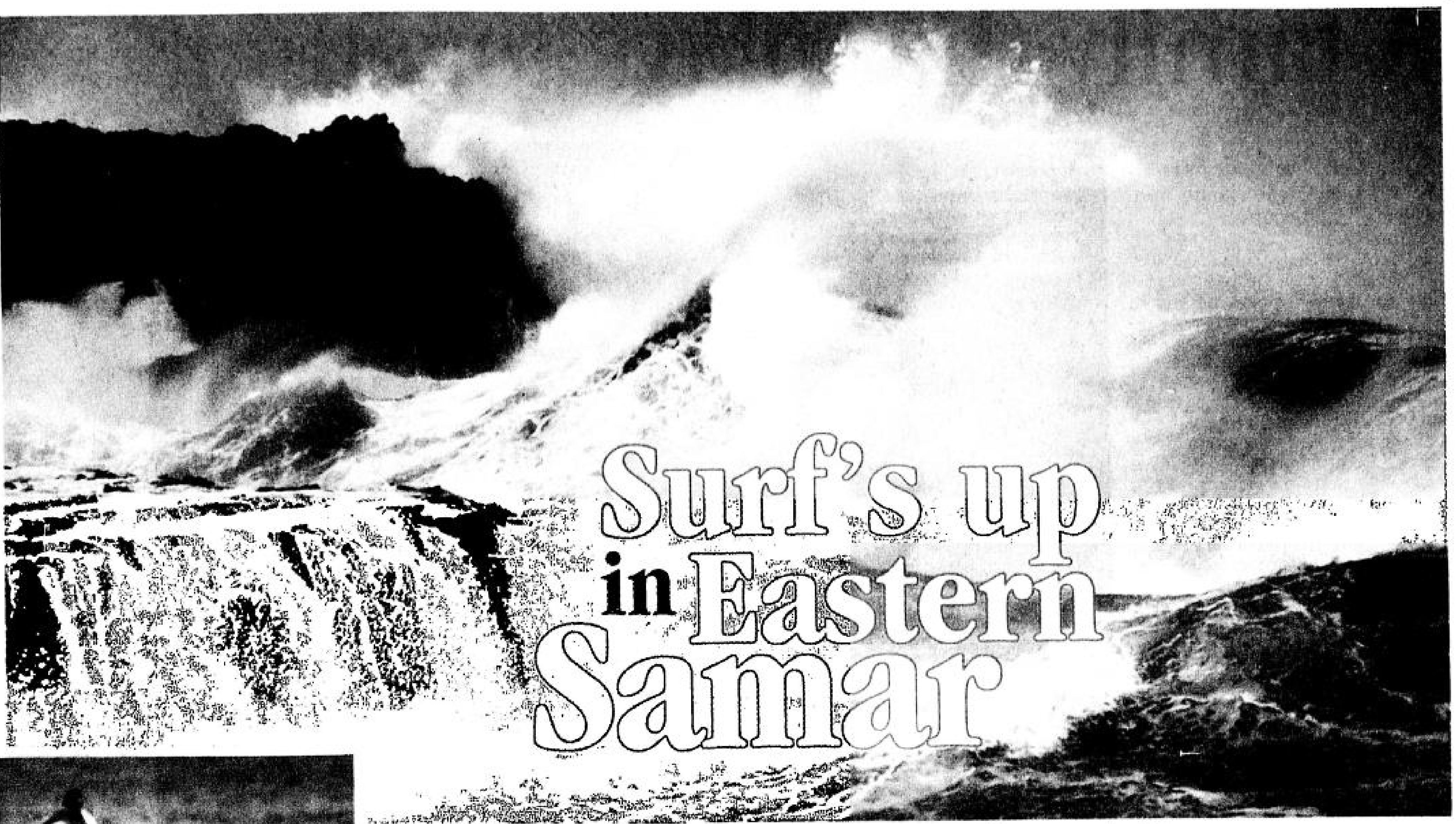
Surf's up in Eastern Samar

Unknown to many, the province boasts of breaks almost the whole year round

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE EASTERN SAMAR PROVINCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM OFFICE (PETO)



AS EASTERN Samar does not get as many typhoons as its neighbors, surfing may be a year-round activity.

LIMITLESS challenges await both master and amateur surfers.

By Eric N. Aseo
Contributor

FOR THOSE who live to surf and surf to live, and vow only to rest when the waves cease to rage, Eastern Samar beckons and dares conquest.

With more than 200 km of shoreline facing the mighty Pacific Ocean, Eastern Samar offers limitless challenges to master and amateur surfers alike.

No wonder the province is fast becoming a favorite surfing destination.

Eastern Samar is located northeast of Tacloban City, the regional center. To reach Borongan, its capital, visitors can fly to Tacloban from Manila. Those coming from Cebu can take a fast craft to Ormoc City and travel by van to Tacloban, then to Borongan.

The province draws surfers because of the year-round breaks in spots set against tropical backdrops. Some of the spots are already known to locals and foreigners. Others are still waiting to be discovered.

Surfing spots

The most famous of the surfing spots is Calico-an Island in Guiuan. The island is a two-hour drive from Tacloban City. With world-class reef breaks, the surfing season here is from March to October, interrupted only occasionally by tropical storms.

The spot on Calico-an Island, which has white sand, is so wide it can accommodate several surfers at the same time. Surfers can find left and right breaks here and even catch an occasional tube ride.

A high-end resort is currently being constructed on the island and will open in August. Calico-an is being considered as a venue for an international surfing competition in October. Originally, the competition was going to be held in Sri Lanka, but the tsunami prompted organizers to look for alternative venues.

Several spots are found in Borongan—Baybay, Bato, Suribao and Sabang. Easily accessible from the town center, these spots are ideal for beginners. They offer nice beach breaks from December to March.

Another surfing spot is in Omawas, Maydolong some 18 kilometers south of Borongan.

Farther south is the Llorente beach break. Located at the back of the municipal hall, the spot is very accessible but is more suitable for seasoned surfers, as it is a deep water spot. Breaks here can be very powerful. The spot is found near two river mouths resulting in quite strong undercurrents.

Up north is the Makati Island reef break which can be reached by boat from Sulat or Taft. The island is ideal for beach camping. But the spot is reportedly shark-infested though local surfers have yet to see one.

Comparative advantage

The entire coastline of Eastern Samar is practically surfing ground as it directly faces the Pacific Ocean. Every surfer will be able to find his or her own spot.

And, unlike those surfing spots in places facing the South China Sea which are only suitable from December to March, year-round surfing, except in June and July, flat months, is possible here.

Eastern Samar also has the advantage of not being as typhoon-prone as some of its neighbors. Thus, the sandbars here are seldom disturbed, thus the breaks are often consistent.

Waves from all directions are also found in Eastern Samar, so surfing is possible in some spot regardless of wind direction.

Moreover, unlike other surfing areas in the country, surfing spots in the province are protected from strong winds that destroy the breaks.

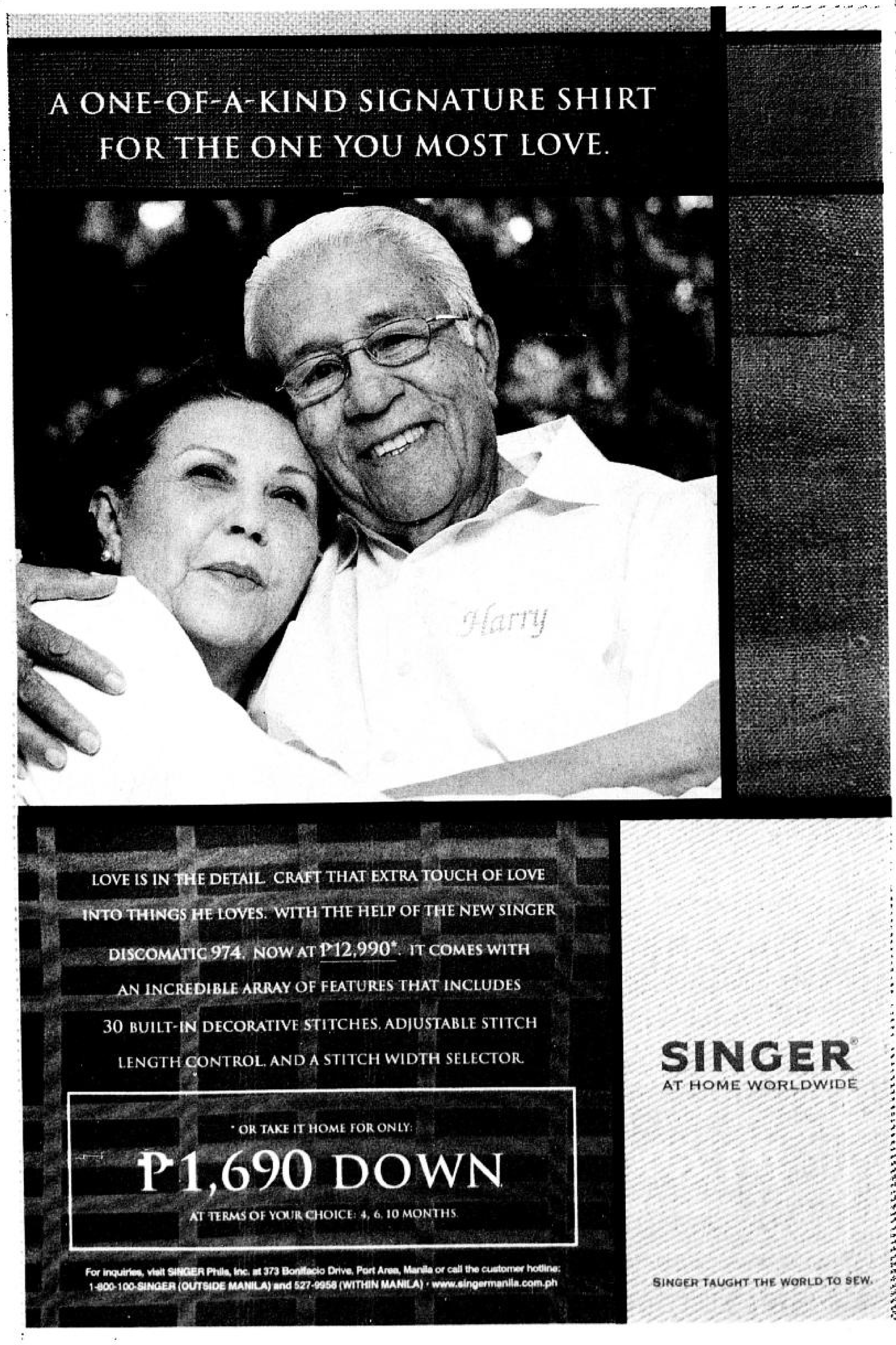
Who to call up

The Eastern Samar Surfers' Association (ESSA) offers surfing clinics and packaged surf tours in the province. It also organizes surfing competitions.

Call ESSA's Bryan Lassiter at 0919-8120190 and 055-2612569 or text Carlos Aga at 0927-3657205.

THE ENTIRE coastline of Eastern Samar is practically surfing ground as it directly faces the Pacific Ocean.

SOME surfing spots are already known to locals and foreigners. Others are still waiting to be discovered.



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